

## HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Thursday 9 October 1980

## ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B

*The Committee met at 11 a.m.*

Community Welfare, \$27 423 000

**Chairman:**

Mr. E. K. Russack

**Members:**

Mr. R. K. Abbott  
 Mr. Lynn Arnold  
 Dr. B. Billard  
 Mr. R. E. Glazbrook  
 Mr. K. C. Hamilton  
 Mr. J. Mathwin  
 Mr. J. K. G. Oswald  
 Mr. K. H. Plunkett

**Witness:**

The Hon. J. C. Burdett, Minister of Community Welfare and Minister of Consumer Affairs.

**Departmental Advisers:**

Mr. I. S. Cox, Director-General of Community Welfare.

Mr. C. E. M. Harris, Acting Deputy Director-General of Community Welfare.

Mr. J. A. Munchenberg, Director, Resource Services Division, Community Welfare Department.

**The CHAIRMAN:** During the answers that he gives to questions, the Minister may state that he will obtain information for the Committee at a later date. I ask that the information be provided in a brief form suitable for inclusion in *Hansard*.

I have examined the minutes of the Committee's meeting held on 8 October and, if there are no objections, I will sign those minutes as a correct record of the proceedings. I understand that members have a copy of the minutes on their desks.

**Mr. ABBOTT:** I should like to ask for your ruling, Sir, in relation to the procedure that will be adopted today. You will be aware that this Committee will conclude at 5.30 p.m. today. When the Committee comes to the Consumer Affairs vote, the Opposition's membership on the Committee will change. Do you, Sir, intend to bracket the questions together before moving on to further lines?

**The CHAIRMAN:** We have adopted the procedure in this Committee that members thereof can change only at the end of a vote. In relation to questions, the Committee has not followed the votes line by line but I have allowed questions on the vote that is before the Chair.

The four votes that the Committee has to consider today are Community Welfare; Minister of Community Welfare, Miscellaneous; Public and Consumer Affairs; and Minister of Consumer Affairs, Miscellaneous. That is the order in which the votes will be called on. The reason for this is that this procedure was, by resolution, adopted on the first day of this Committee's sittings.

**Mr. ABBOTT:** We are quite happy to reach an agreement. However, we are waiting for information from our Leader regarding how much time he is likely to require to deal with the consumer affairs vote. When we get some indication from him of that, we will be prepared to conclude our questioning, thereby enabling a certain time

to be spent on that vote.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I am happy for the Committee to proceed and, when that information is at hand, we will consider that matter.

**Mr. ABBOTT:** Thank you, Sir.

**Mr. LYNN ARNOLD:** In regard to the matters raised by the member concerning brackets of questions, yesterday we had a situation that did not provide for the smooth running of the Committee, when certain lines of investigation were interrupted because new members wanted to speak on a line. Members were expected to wait their turn for alternative questioning. If one line of questioning is being pursued, can one member on either side of the Committee speak continuously on that line, rather than having to wait?

**The CHAIRMAN:** I have been considering this matter. While there are definite advantages, there can be some disadvantages. For instance, if we follow just one line of questioning it may be only the members of the Committee on my left who are interested in that line and questioning from that side could continue for an hour. Yesterday morning there was questioning about proposals concerning China. That questioning continued for two hours. If members on my right were interested in that question they could have been deprived of asking a question for two hours. I can say to the member that I will try to keep within an acceptable level and, secondly, if members on my right have a question that is pertinent to the matter being discussed by members on my left, perhaps they could ask their questions at the appropriate time. That would be helpful.

**Mr. LYNN ARNOLD:** Yesterday, Mr. Chairman, you ruled that a bracket of six questions finished a subject before a swap to the other side was made. I accept that decision, but if it were to happen that a member from this side proceeded on a line of questioning and asked two questions and other members from this side wanted to continue that line of questioning and had not asked six questions, would you permit members from this side to ask questions until a bracket of six questions was completed without interruption?

**The CHAIRMAN:** No. There was no definite decision about six questions. I mentioned that as a number only and, if we did what the member is suggesting, we could come back to the same difficulty. We can do our best to conform as far as possible but, in fairness, I must continue the present procedure and alternate with members questioning from one side to another. Six questions is not a fixed number. I thought it was reasonable and, if a member is questioning on the same line, surely he can condense into six questions all the information that he requires.

**Mr. LYNN ARNOLD:** I take your point, but I am sorry that that is the decision that you are taking. By way of interjection it has been suggested that we cannot change the rules of the Committee on its last day of hearings, yet the printed report of proceedings from last week shows that you did allow different members on this side to pursue a line of questioning before questioning came from the other side of the Committee. By yesterday we were honing down to a new policy, where we had to swap over from one side to another. That is unfortunate.

**The CHAIRMAN:** In last week's proceedings of the Committee, no members at that stage on my right had indicated that they had a question, so naturally I would call members from my left. True, on reading the report that is how it would appear, but that is the explanation—at that stage possibly no members on my right had indicated that they had a question.

**Mr. ABBOTT:** I can now indicate that we are willing to

conclude questioning in relation to community welfare matters at 3 o'clock.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Are there any objections to that suggested time of 3 o'clock?

**Mr. MATHWIN:** Although I have no objections, I would like to comment on the matters raised by the member for Salisbury. Obviously, the member wanted to take over the Committee. We believe that six questions are far too many, but it is a flexible situation.

When I have been in the Chair during the sittings of this Committee I have allowed what I thought to be a reasonable number of questions. It would be most unreasonable if the Opposition were going to try to take over the whole of the questioning by asking six questions each time it got the call. That would not be suitable to me, and I think it would be most unjust.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I appreciate the honourable member's comments. I understand that the member for Salisbury has indicated that he does not fully agree with but will accept the situation.

**Mr. LYNN ARNOLD:** I have merely asked about the matter of the limit of six questions.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I believe that the member for Fisher wishes to raise a point.

**Mr. Evans:** All I wish to do is offer the suggestion that, where one side wishes to continue a line of questioning and there is no objection by the other side, the question could be asked because it may be of advantage to the Committee.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I thank the honourable member for his suggestion but, because of experience to date with these matters, I think that if we adopt a procedure we should adhere to it, and that is what will occur. I declare the proposed expenditure open for examination.

**Mr. ABBOTT:** The proposed estimates of payments for community welfare for 1980-81 total \$27 423 000, which represents a cut-back for the Department of Community Welfare of \$3 977 357, or almost \$4 000 000, at a time when demands for welfare assistance have never been greater. With inflation running at around 11 per cent, this represents an enormous cut in both money and real terms. I believe it indicates quite clearly a very real change in the Government's support of welfare and its commitment in this matter. Let me take this point a little further. The department is no longer responsible for the payment of land tax concessions, except for a very small amount. Nor is it responsible for Aboriginal affairs. It now has less responsibility for income maintenance, and huge cuts are made in the areas of accounting branch operations and residential care facilities.

If one looks at land tax, the amount provided is \$613 485 less than for the previous year; for Aboriginal affairs, \$92 417 less; residential care facilities, \$263 255 less; and accounting branch, \$80 732 less. The big amount, of course is income maintenance, which is a massive \$4 349 458 less than last year. That is a total of \$5 399 348 that the department is not responsible for in this financial year. If one were to add that amount to last year's actual payments, one would still finish up with an insignificant amount to provide for and meet the present day demands for welfare services and assistance. This will make it extremely difficult for the introduction and expansion of any welfare policies and programmes. It will also be difficult to provide the necessary and proper support to other groups already functioning in welfare areas. Would the Minister or his officers care to comment on my remarks, or to express their views on the general allocation of finances for community welfare in this Budget?

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** There has not been a cut-back.

On the contrary, there has been an increase of 6.5 per cent. One cannot compare apples with oranges. One has to look at the Budget on the basis of seeing what it is there to provide.

The honourable member mentioned two areas in which my department no longer has responsibility. One of those areas is Aboriginal affairs, and that accounts for \$102 000; the other area is supporting parent benefits. The honourable member obviously knows that, as at 1 July 1980, we withdrew from the previous basis for sole supporting parent benefits and handed over the total obligation to the Commonwealth. This was done in Victoria prior to that; South Australia was the second State to operate on that basis. I can give figures later, but I indicate that, in this massive area, South Australia no longer has responsibility—the responsibility lies with the Commonwealth.

For a number of years South Australia has provided income support to sole parents who were awaiting eligibility for Commonwealth supporting parent benefits. The State received up to 50 per cent reimbursement from the Commonwealth under the State Grants (Deserted Wives) Act. From 1 July 1980, South Australia withdrew from that funding arrangement. The Commonwealth now pays sole parents a special benefit, with my department providing a children's allowance, so that the total payments to sole parents equates with those payable as a supporting parent beneficiary. The Commonwealth is to amend the Social Services Act and remove the waiting period before sole parents are eligible for the supporting parent benefit. There has been some doubt about the date, but we believe that this will apply as from 6 November 1980.

Therefore, from that date, deserted wives and other sole supporting parents will receive a supporting parent benefit as from the date of application. Because of the work that the officers of my department put into this transition, we have proceeded in a far more efficient and smooth way than the authorities in Victoria achieved, but I suppose that this is understandable because that State was the leader in this regard. We have not experienced many problems and I do not believe that the clients (those people who have applied for the benefit) have been disadvantaged. The effect of these arrangements is as follows:

1. For those clients being assisted as at 30 November 1980 support will continue at the normal level pending acceptance by the Commonwealth. However, these will also be eligible for the supporting parent benefit from 6 November 1980 and they are being advised to apply to the Federal Department of Social Security.

2. New sole supporting parent cases from 1 July 1980 are being paid the "special benefit" by the department of Social Security and "children's allowance" by this department until 5 November 1980.

I stress again that these dates are not certain; we believe that the date will be either 5 November or 6 November 1980. From 6 November 1980, these people will be eligible for the supporting parent benefit. I will continue with the effect of the arrangements:

3. Persons applying for the supporting parent benefit after 6 November 1980 will have a waiting period of one to 13 days. If they are in hardship, the Department of Social Security may pay a "special benefit" (hardship).

4. In some cases, sole parents will not be eligible for the supporting parent benefit due to residence grounds (require five years in Australia). They will be paid a "special benefit" by the Department of Social Security and a "children's allowance" top up by this department.

5. A meeting will be held with representatives of

various women's groups (for example, women's shelters) in mid October to outline the proposed changes and discuss any concerns they may have.

My department has taken every possible step to ensure that the clients are not disadvantaged. For example, for the first six months the clients came to our department and received payment from us for those six months. Now they go to the Department of Social Security, so they do not have access to our social workers. To offset this, we have arranged with the Commonwealth that officers of the Commonwealth department will be available to help people, at least in the short term. They will not be able to provide long-term counselling and support, but they will in the short term. People will not be disadvantaged in that way. If they need long-term counselling or other support from our department, they will be given a reference slip and will be able to go and have the matter taken up.

The only possible sort of disability would be the suggestion that they would have to go from one department to another. That would happen only once. We have taken great care about people who are obliged to seek supporting parents' benefits. We acknowledge that for the first six months, which is carried by the State, they are in a period of hardship. We have taken care to see that they are not disadvantaged. Even on the Christmas benefit, we have arranged with the Commonwealth that we will be able to pick out the names and pay them that, as we did previously. The proposed change from 6 July 1980 will result in a further saving of \$970 000 in 1980-81 and \$3 300 000 in a full year. This is above the \$4 300 000 already reflected in the 1980-81 Estimates.

I know that the member for Spence and I have differences in political philosophy but we both are firmly committed to welfare, and the Government considers that it can, within this Budget, operate without any cut-back in the delivery of welfare services. The member has correctly stated that there are cut-backs in administrative areas. We believe they can be achieved without any diminution in the delivery of welfare services but we, as a Government, have specifically determined that we will not tolerate any cut-back in welfare services.

If we are proved wrong and if we cannot maintain the delivery of welfare services in this Budget, the Budget will suffer, not the delivery. Delivery will continue. We are well into the current financial year and we are operating on this basis. We acknowledge that the Budget is tight, as the member has said, and, because of that, we have set up a small group with membership from outside our department as well as from within it, to examine these problems of maintaining the delivery of welfare services within this Budget.

That group is not just sitting in central office. It is going into the field to see the actual delivery of welfare services. I suppose it is difficult to budget for welfare. In some other States, there are much more niggardly allocations than there are here. I suppose one could provide some measure of welfare on a fraction of this Budget, or one could go much higher. It is difficult for the Government to assess the amount needed and where to stop. For that reason, we have set up this tight group of senior officers who will go into the field and assess the degree to which we can maintain the delivery of welfare services on this Budget. If we cannot maintain it, we expect that the Budget will be topped up to that extent.

On the general matters raised by the honourable member, that is all that I have to say. On a few individual things like residential care, I think my Director-General, Mr. Cox, may have something to add.

**Mr. Cox:** The question of residential care throughout the Budget reflects that there are decreases in certain

regions. An attempt has been made to identify regions in the Budget lines, rather than generalise. The honourable member will see that there are increases and decreases in residential care. We have tried to prevent children going into residential care. So, there has been an overall increase in foster care and subsidies to guardianships. There is an increase in that line. The second point is that residential care uses group homes, and many of those group homes have been changed to admission units. The cost of running admission units is cheaper than the cost of running group homes in terms of staff.

**Mr. ABBOTT:** The Estimates of Resource Allocation on page 522, under the heading "Comments on major variations between years", state:

The reduction of \$3 171 000 results from the handing over to the Commonwealth of responsibility for financial assistance to deserted wives and sole parents.

That is accepted. At the time the decision was taken the Minister stated that the savings would allow the department to introduce other programmes and permit the expansion of a number of other initiatives in areas of assistance to the needy. The Premier also stated, in his second reading explanation of the Appropriation Bill (No. 2), that the savings achieved through the introduction of this arrangement would enable the reallocation of resources to other areas of need. As a result, the departmental allocation for 1980-81 is \$27 400 000 compared with actual expenditure of \$31 400 000 last year. He went on to say that that allocation should enable the department to maintain existing services.

I ask the Minister what other programmes have been expanded. What new initiatives have been introduced and what needy areas have been assisted? What are the specific amounts being spent in each area? In other words, I want to know where the department or the Government has spent that \$3 171 000.

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** There have been a number of increases, mostly on the other line. Community Welfare grants have been increased by \$250 000. Non-statutory residential care homes have been substantially increased. A number of new initiatives have been taken. At the same time I repeat what I have said before: we believe that savings can be achieved in administration, and we are aiming to cut administration costs. We believe that this can be done without detriment to the delivery of welfare services. As I have said, if there is a conflict, if it transpires that we cannot maintain the services, it will be the Budget that suffers, and not the services.

Other initiatives have been taken and I think honourable members will know of these, particularly the Family Research Unit and the setting up of family impact statements by that unit. They have been new initiatives. The programme for young offenders for the 1980's is a new initiative which will assist young offenders. The programme, "Familiespeak", which is being undertaken this year is a new initiative that will assist families.

So, we have an increase in other areas, more particularly in the vote for Minister of Community Welfare, Miscellaneous. Also, we believe that it is possible to cut administration costs without adversely affecting the delivery of welfare services. There are other aspects of this about which Mr. Cox could speak.

**Mr. Cox:** I did not catch the whole list to which Mr. Abbott referred.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Would you mind repeating them, Mr. Abbott?

**Mr. ABBOTT:** What other programmes have been expanded; what new initiatives have been introduced; what needy areas have been assisted; and what was the cost of each specific area involved?

**Mr. Cox:** I refer to the Intensive Neighbourhood Care Service, for which \$310 000 has been provided this year compared to \$130 000 last year, repeating an increase of \$180 000. The Budgetary Advice Service has an increase of staff hours, although not necessarily in direct cash grants, because of the removal of the sole parent responsibility in our department. The clerical staff in district offices have been given additional responsibilities, and this will give a better budget advice service.

The Minister referred to an item in the Miscellaneous grants, in which there has generally been a 4 per cent increase in financial assistance. This was in line with the probationary Treasury figure. Those are some of the details that I am able to give immediately.

**Mr. ABBOTT:** I refer to the report of the Community Welfare Advisory Committee on the Delivery of Community Welfare Services in South Australia. This is a new report, which was handed to me by the Minister only the other day, and I thank the Minister for the courtesy of providing me with a copy of it. I have not yet had an opportunity to read the whole report, although I have browsed through the 90-odd recommendations that are contained in it. I believe that, if those 90-odd recommendations were implemented, the Government would have to double not only the department's staff but also the finance committed to community welfare matters.

Does the Minister intend to implement some of the 90-odd recommendations this financial year and, if he does, which ones will be implemented? Perhaps more important, how does the Minister intend to finance some of the recommendations, and does he intend to abolish any existing programmes in order to provide the necessary finance?

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** It was provided in the Government's policy speech that we would, if elected, set up an inquiry into the delivery of welfare services, based in particular on the department's requirements in relation to the delivery of those services. As is acknowledged in the Mann Committee's Report, this is the first report in Australia, and probably the world, that has required a survey of clients' responses, with a view to changing the system.

I am very pleased with this report, which is exciting and which indicates (and this reflects favourably not only on the present Government but also on the former Government) that there was a very high acceptance indeed by clients of the department's services. Indeed, the acceptance rate was 75 per cent and, in some cases, up to 82 per cent, which is indeed a high acceptance level.

The whole 92 recommendations (some of which are already being implemented, anyway) must be seen against the background that there was an extraordinarily high level of client acceptance. Because we are in budgetary times, when I first saw the draft report on 31 July, I asked for a list to be made of those that would require the expenditure of more money. I very much disagree with the honourable member about his estimate of doubling the amount involved; I do not think that that is true. Many of these things could be done without the expenditure of more money, and ways and means of implementing them are being examined.

A working party has been set up within the department to examine each of the 92 recommendations. However, it does not follow that they will all be implemented. Many of the recommendations seem to me to be very good, and each of them will be favourably examined.

Everyone would realise that the Budget papers had been prepared before the report was delivered, so we cannot be expected to find the money from this year's Budget. A report of this nature had not been sought for a

long time. Previously, the Brown Committee looked mainly at the community welfare aspect. However, an inquiry of this nature into the delivery of welfare services had not been conducted for a long time.

In reply to the honourable member's question, regarding the more urgent recommendations that may involve the expenditure of money, we would be thinking of applying for further funds. We acknowledge that the others could not be expected to be provided for in this Budget, as the report was presented after the Budget papers had been prepared. Many of the recommendations can be implemented without the expenditure of funds, or with only a minimal expenditure of additional funds.

The inquiry was set up because we wanted to know what the reaction of clients was and whether the system could be improved. I believed when I was in Opposition that the welfare system in South Australia is a good one, but all systems can be improved. I had sensed some areas in which I thought improvements could be made, and one of them was foster care, which is always a sensitive and difficult area.

There is much merit (without my saying that I will implement them) in the recommendations that have been made in the report in this regard. To show what I mean, one of the very important recommendations in that area is the suggestion of a guardianship (I think that in England they call it a custodianship) position, midway between foster care and adoption for children who are in foster care for a long time. Also, in that area a suggestion was made regarding families of origin reconstitution: setting up a system whereby children who have been fostered out simply because of financial difficulties in the family can be cared for in their own family surroundings.

An exciting range of recommendations have been made in the report, and they will certainly all be looked at. In summary, the budgetary matters that are beyond the scope of this year's Budget will be looked at later, because we did not have the report when the Budget was prepared. I hope I can ensure the implementation of some of the recommendations, which will cost money. As I have said, a departmental working party is looking at each recommendation in order to recommend to me what should be done about them. The Acting Deputy Director-General, Mr. Harris, can make some comments on details in this matter.

**Mr. Harris:** As the Minister said, the working party has been established and is working on each of the recommendations. Some of the committee's recommendations can be supported or implemented by changes being made to the Bill to amend the Community Welfare Act, which the Government hopes to introduce as soon as possible. Members of the committee were included in discussions on the proposed legislative changes.

Efforts are being made also by the department to improve communications within the community by developing improved and more readable pamphlets and documents which were, to some extent, criticised in the Mann Report. We are looking at ways of implementing a more efficient and effective telephone information service on welfare issues which, hopefully, can span the whole 24 hours. Obviously, this facility may be more difficult to implement in country areas, but we think it can be established within reasonable time to cover the metropolitan area in particular.

Consideration is also being given to ways of establishing a system of access workers to industry. Again, it will be appreciated that this will need to be introduced carefully in order to ensure that such workers have the full support of both workers and management. We are looking at ways of improving access to welfare services through schools in the

community. A number of other suggestions and recommendations in the report do require legislative changes, and they will be examined in terms of the draft legislation being considered. Furthermore, some of the recommendations can be introduced by administrative changes, changes in procedures, and changed ways of looking at issues within the department, and we will attempt to implement those changes as quickly as possible.

A fairly specific recommendation in the Mann Report is to try to extend services within country areas. It will be appreciated that in many country areas sometimes the only welfare service is provided through departmental facilities and officers. Over a number of years there has been difficulty in gaining sufficient qualified and experienced workers in country areas, and we are making representations to see whether we can extend and continue the external studies course in social work through the institute, because it is thought that by this means we are more likely to gain the experienced mature people in country areas who are willing to be trained and who would later be able to provide services within their community.

As the Minister explained, some other proposals require a more detailed study, perhaps involving an examination of staffing needs and other resources needed to implement proposals. We will be working on that as quickly as we can and will introduce to the Minister, as soon as possible, ways of implementing those recommendations.

**Mr. MATHWIN:** First, what is the department's thinking concerning concentration of community services orders? What method is to be used to define what type of work should be done and where it is to be done? What contacts has the department made and what contacts is it expecting to make in relation to the organisations to be involved? Is the department contacting local government or any other organisations? What organisations have already been contacted? What has been the reaction of people and organisations contacted so far? Has there yet been a call for volunteers to help with the scheme? Anyone with knowledge of the operation of the scheme will realise that it calls for a vast number of volunteers to help implement it. The Minister knows that I have spent much time on the question of community service orders and restitution orders, which I believe should be instituted as soon as possible.

As well as applying to young people, the scheme should apply to senior people who are in conflict with the law, so that they can provide some form of restitution responsibility. Even the High Court should be able to impose such orders on criminals in that jurisdiction and provide them with the opportunity to make proper restitution. I understand that community service orders have been working successfully in many parts of the world, and doubtless a report will be released indicating where are the most successful schemes. Much depends on who administers this matter within the department, at headquarters, and on the people given the responsibility for ensuring that the full work component is carried out.

It is pointless being over-lenient with the people in question and, if they undertake a responsibility and sign a contract to complete work in a certain time, the undertaking must be properly and responsibly carried out and supervised. That is the crux of the success of the scheme. Further, in today's paper reference has been made to the many youths who have already undertaken community service orders. It is claimed that the scheme is successful and the report states:

The present average number of youths in security centres for non-payment of fines was only one. Before the scheme the average had been six.

With due respect, that could be correct, but I refer the

Committee to the report *Crime and Justice in South Australia*, a quarterly report for the period ended 30 June 1980, which was published in September 1980. The report indicates at page 38 (there are far too many categories to consider individually) that a total of 218 fines were imposed by the Children's Court. Although I know nothing about the responsibility or circumstances of many parents involved, I am aware of the inability of many juveniles to pay such fines. Is it correct that about 218 young people paid fines? How successful are community service orders proving, and what criteria are used by the department in defining the work to be undertaken? Where is the work to be done, who supervises it, and how many volunteers have already come forward?

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** The matters referred to by the member concerning community work orders are important. I agree with him that both with children, persons under 18 years, and with adults, this must be part of correction in the future. In regard to persons over 18 years, it is not my area and I cannot comment on it, but in regard to children the system has been put into effect to some extent already, as the member has said, in regard to defaulters. As the member has said, the system has been instituted for some time and is in operation.

Young people who have not paid their fines will have the option of, instead of going into secure care, carrying out work orders on the basis of a day's work for \$10 of the fine. A number of young people (40 I think) have carried this out. As was reported in the press this morning, the scheme has been so successful that some of these young people who worked off their court orders decided to stay on and do the job on a voluntary basis. They got themselves wrapped up in the idea of community service.

The honourable member asked whether voluntary organisations were being used in this regard, and they are. I do not recall the whole list, but organisations like Meals on Wheels, Kesab, CITY, Avago and similar organisations are being used to monitor the work of these young people working off court orders. We intend investigating extending the system further, with work orders, which are provided for legislatively in the Children's Protection and Young Offenders Act, being determined by the court in the first case. As a pilot scheme, we are using it with defaulters. I look forward to seeing the honourable member's report of his trip overseas because I would like to have the benefit of the information he has collected.

I think that restitution is also a most important matter. Members would be aware that the Government has set up a Victims of Crime Committee, a fairly high-powered committee. Obviously, my department is not going to consider further restitution orders (because it pertains, obviously, to victims of crime) until that committee has reported. The honourable member who asked the question told me that he would be making a submission to that committee, and I hope he has done so because, certainly, I regard restitution as being a most important matter in correction, whether it relates to children or adults.

The honourable member, in the course of his comments, also said that these things have to be right. I believe that that is most important, and that work orders relating to young defaulters have to be right. I believe that the scheme has been started on the right path and that, if it is to be used as a form of punishment (if you like to use that term) in the first place, instead of waiting until there has been a fine and default, then the system has to be correctly worked out. The same will apply with adults, so I think we have to proceed with caution and make sure that the whole system works correctly.

Turning, again, to the matter of restitution, the

Government has appointed a Victims of Crime Committee. We have to look at the report of that committee, first. One of the matters regarding young defaulters and work orders is that I believe some of them are in default over fines for traffic offences and things of that kind. I do not believe that it is in their own interests, or the interests of the community or anyone else, that they should be detained if there is some alternative sanction, and a work order is a sanction.

I think that it is common knowledge now, and it has been reported in the press several times, that the cost of maintaining a young offender in a secure care institution is in excess of \$42 000 a year, so obviously, economically, it is much more in the interests of the community if the sanction can be maintained for non-payment of a fine without keeping the person in secure care. Turning to the figures the honourable member mentioned regarding non-payment of fines, there has been a backlog of warrants because at one time after the introduction of the Children's Protection and Young Offenders Act the court had some doubt whether defaulters could be ordered into detention. That probably explains some of the figures raised. It may not be possible to establish how many defaulters are in secure care at a given time. It is nothing like those figures. The backlog is being caught up. Mr. Cox will be able to assist with further information.

**Mr. Cox:** The table to which I am about to refer is available, and if it could be inserted in *Hansard* it would be a useful table in answering Mr. Mathwin's question. The total number of persons detained or on warrant for non-payment of fines last year was 196. Of those, 64 were on detention and 132 on warrant for the non-payment of fines. Eventually, of those 132 people, 47 paid their fines (once they were imprisoned they paid their fine to get out), and 85 persons served their full term. I think that that gives some idea of the proportion of young people serving detention for non-payment of fines. Of course, our programme in relation to that is to reduce that number considerably in this financial year. The table to which I have been referring is as follows:

CHILDREN DETAINED UNDER DETENTION ORDERS  
OR WARRANTS FOR NON-PAYMENT OF FINE—YEAR  
ENDED 30 JUNE 1980

	m	f	Total	Per cent of total
Detention	59	5	64	32.7
Warrant	118	14	132	67.3
Totals for the year	177	19	196	100
Releases from:				
Detention	30	2	32	16.3
Warrants—				
Fines paid	43	4	47	24.0
Term served	75	10	85	43.4
Total releases	148	16	164	83.7
Children on detention orders as at 30 June 1980	29	3	32	16.3

Note:

(1) Detention—Children placed on detention orders during year under Section 51 of the Children's Protection and Young Offenders Act.

(2) Children admitted more than once are counted accordingly.

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** Mr. Harris has some further information.

**Mr. Harris:** The honourable member mentioned work orders, of which there are two types. One could potentially be part of a bond order under the Children's Protection and Young Offenders Act, which allows the

Director-General to direct children to either a project centre or community project. Very few of those orders incorporating that have been made so far. The second type of work order is the one that the Minister has already explained which is a part of a system to ensure that there is a sanction in default of fines, but this sanction need not necessarily require the young person to be placed in secure care. It is obvious that some will, nevertheless, serve their detention period in default in secure care, because they may already be there on a detention order and would wish (and probably the court would wish them) to serve that default period following the period for which they are detained on a court order.

So there will be some still remaining in secure care centres who have a detention order and also an order of default which they choose to serve out or which the court may request or require them to serve out in detention. Since the introduction of the residential detention arrangements, some 450 warrants have been received from the Children's Court. An estimated 200 of these represented a backlog of unserved warrants previously held by the police. The remaining 252 have been issued since the beginning of the scheme.

A high proportion of these warrants was for fines resulting from traffic offences and it appears that, once contacted, many of the youths or their parents would arrange for the payment of the fine. For those who do not pay the fine, there will be this alternative of the work order. A question has been raised about supervision of children undertaking work orders and it has been said that several voluntary organisations are providing work under the scheme.

Besides that, there is a monitoring of the programme to ensure that the hours in default are secured adequately by an officer attached to one of our Young Offender Units. Three people are involved in getting work through proper organisations and ensuring that the work is done to the satisfaction of the organisation and that the youth serves the time required of him. That seems to be working well at the moment. We also hope that, by the constant monitoring of the fine situation, a high proportion of the fines will continue to be paid so that there is not the requirement for the detention to be served in a secure centre.

**Mr. MATHWIN:** What areas are most successful? The different areas are northern, Salisbury, Campbelltown, Port Augusta, Brompton, and so on. Are they all areas of community service orders or are they areas that have some clients (that is the Canadian word, not the Australian word), and how many Meals on Wheels branches have been contacted? I take it that the department did not just contact headquarters but contacted the branches in the areas.

**Mr. ABBOTT:** What about McNally?

**Mr. MATHWIN:** I said I would only ask one question, but I could keep going for a long time. How many district kitchens were approached and how many agreed to take young delinquents? I know of one that was not successful.

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** In a moment, I will ask Mr. Harris to give details. The list of organisations was in the press release that I put out recently. I stated in the press release (and I have said this on radio) that, if any other voluntary organisation that has not been contacted or involved is interested, the organisation should contact Mr. Kennedy, at the central eastern office, and he will advise.

**Mr. Harris:** I cannot say specifically how many branches of Meals on Wheels have been contacted, or how many have provided work, but perhaps I could recount how the scheme operates. First, there was a backlog between the time of the new legislation and the implementation of the

scheme. Before then there had been an accumulation of warrants outstanding because advice had been received that we could not, under the legislation as it was, keep children in detention in default of fines until the amendments were made. That backlog had to be met.

Initially, it was decided that it would be desirable to set up a centralised scheme to deal with the whole arrangement. This was done through the department's Central Eastern Region. The intent of that was to obtain from the Children's Court, by arrangement, details of those warrants that they were prepared to have served out in the community, because the option lies with the court. Given that, it seemed sensible to arrange it through a central point so that the work could be done and the defaulting period met.

Once we get down to dealing with the normal flow of warrants for default, which one can estimate at approximately 12 or, at the most, 15 a week, based on past figures, I suggest that the way to implement the scheme would be through the local district offices and by directing offenders to those offices. The district offices would be responsible for organising programmes and seeing that the tasks were carried out.

It seems desirable to try to do two things while we are applying these sanctions, namely, to apply the sanctions and ensure that the defaulting period is met, and at the same time to provide the type of work that will give incentive to the young person to continue that type of family activity or, if you like, to make symbolic restitution because the offender is working for an organisation that is known and is making a contribution to the community.

Many will not be able to make restitution in cash, but they can make this symbolic restitution by working for an organisation that is providing community service, whether to the elderly people, the handicapped, or some other group. The scheme is centralised and we are providing a broad-brush approach initially, but later we hope to arrange it through the district offices and to provide, through them, particular work projects that will benefit the community and the young offender.

**Mr. LYNN ARNOLD:** I refer to the provisions relating to administration in the various sections of the Department for Community Welfare and also to the emergency financial assistance and adoption items. The Minister said that, if the department was unable to provide all the services demanded of it, the Budget would suffer, not the services, and I think we appreciate that sentiment. However, I am not sure that that shows through in the figures that we have. The Minister has said that there is a 6.5 per cent increase in the department's spending relating to the activities that are still on-going. Whether that was a real increase after provision for inflation was not stated.

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** It is a cash increase.

**Mr. LYNN ARNOLD:** We have the acknowledgement that, in real terms, it is a reduction. Last year, for community welfare, \$31 400 000 was spent, and in inflated terms that would be equal to \$34 400 000. We are being asked to allocate \$27 000 000 this year, which is a reduction of about \$7 000 000. The Minister said that there were savings under the Aboriginal affairs scheme. That does not come under this vote. It is under "Miscellaneous".

The Minister also mentioned \$970 000. We have the savings on the family maintenance scheme of \$4 300 000. That brings us to a difference of \$1 700 000 that has still been cut somewhere, if we compare the 1980 amounts to the 1979 amounts. I have taken the Minister's advice that the department wants to cut down administration costs, and I have looked through the figures. Some of them are not reassuring. Under the heading "Administration",

referred to in the first paragraph of the figures, there is a reduction from \$2 720 000 to \$2 680 000, which in cash is a saving of \$40 000 and in real terms a saving of \$300 000. That gets towards part of the \$7 000 000.

Then, I looked at the other areas that have to do with regional administration and found that we do not see the same evidence of cuts taking place in the administration component. I refer to the line "Regional Administration" and "Community Welfare Centres, District and Branch Offices" which would include an administration component. To summarise the data that appears there, we see that for regional administration, the Central Northern, Central Eastern and Central Western Regions have all had increases in real terms (in other words, in inflated terms) in the provision of administration. Central Southern and Southern Country Regions have both had reductions in real terms while the Northern Country Region has had an actual increase but a real decrease—if one can follow that. The net effect of all that is that the regional offices administration section of all those lines comes out to a net real saving of \$22 000 for all offices.

We come to the branch office situation and come out with a bigger saving. The Central Southern and Southern Country Regions have both gone up in real terms in the allocations granted to them, while the Central Northern, Central Eastern, Central Western, and Northern Country Regions have all gone up in actual terms but down in real terms.

**Mr. MATHWIN:** Central Northern is up half a million.

**Mr. LYNN ARNOLD:** I am talking about the line, "Community Welfare Centres, District and Branch Offices" for each of these figures. The actual figure for payments is \$1 189 108, and the amount proposed is \$1 237 300. I am allowing a 10 per cent inflation figure. We have had various inflation figures over the last two weeks, and that is as good a one as any to take. That gives us a saving of \$300 000. So far, we have a saving up to \$622 000. However, there is still a difference of \$1 100 000. These lines are predominantly connected with administration and I tried to extract all of the savings that seem to have been allocated there and I am still left with \$1 100 000 which has somehow come off somewhere. It worries me that it may have come off service provider areas rather than areas with high administration components.

As evidence of that I can quote two examples; namely, the "Emergency Financial Assistance" line and also the "Adoptions" line. The Emergency Financial Assistance line, I imagine, is entirely a figure related to service provision. In other words, it entirely quotes the money paid out to people who have requested emergency financial assistance. In no way do I imagine that it includes an administration component, as it is taken care of under other lines. The situation we have there is that the allocations provided for Central Northern, Central Southern, and Central Eastern Regions have all gone up in real terms, but the allocation for Central Western, Northern Country and Southern Country Regions have all gone down in real terms. The net effect is that in real terms after allowing for inflation, I have calculated that there has been a \$20 000 cut in the amount allocated for emergency financial assistance. That directly comes from a service area and not from an administration area.

I know that the Minister has said that, if there are demands, it will not be the services that are cut but the administration that is cut. The first set of figures that I would appreciate is the inclusion in *Hansard* of month-by-month (or, if that is not possible, quarter-by-quarter) figures for payments for the last financial year by each regional office under the heading, "Emergency Financial

Assistance". The basis of that is so that we can see whether, in fact, there has been a reduction in payments. I am led to believe from information I have that community welfare officers are being forced into the situation of saying, "We are sorry; we cannot give financial assistance now because our money has run out and there is no more left". I think that the figures I have asked for will help to clarify the situation if, indeed, that is what is happening.

The same takes place with adoptions. We can see that the amount is reduced from \$140 000 to \$117 000. In taking account of inflation, that gives a real decline of \$38 000. It has only come to my notice in the last two weeks that this is going to have an impact on service provision as much as on administration. I appreciate that that cut could well be in the administration of the department, but it is the service provision effect that will be quite severe. I mentioned how long it takes for adoptions to be handled by the Department for Community Welfare. When I contacted an officer of the department and asked how long it would take if a parent took the matter to the department, I was told that normally it would take six to nine months.

**Mr. MATHWIN:** To have the baby.

**Mr. LYNN ARNOLD:** I am referring to children who have already entered the world and want to be adopted by a new step-parent. I do not think the Minister is able to reduce the waiting period that the honourable member refers to. The six to nine month period is no longer the period, because of staff shortages, and a longer time is now involved. That seems to be an administration cut that is directly impinging on service provision. They are the two reasons, and we could find others if we went through the figures.

I would appreciate the Minister's comments on those points, as well as an undertaking that those figures will be provided in regard to emergency financial assistance and an indication of exactly where that \$1 100 000 difference is absorbed.

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** The figures on a month-by-month or quarter-by-quarter basis for emergency financial assistance will be provided by Mr. Cox as soon as I have finished, as they are available. I think the honourable member at one stage acknowledged that I said we were covering less areas, but at a later stage in what he had to say he forgot that point again. I must repeat that we are no longer covering sole supporting parent benefits. I gave the figures, and that is a very large part of the figure out of the Budget. We are no longer dealing with Aboriginal affairs, although that is under the "Miscellaneous" line.

The honourable member also referred to the figure of \$970 000, which I mentioned. I said that it was estimated that the proposed change would be from 6 November 1980 although I said that it is not a firm date yet, and would result in a further saving of \$970 000 in 1980-81 and a further \$3 300 000 in a full year.

**Mr. LYNN ARNOLD:** Is that over and above the \$4 300 000?

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** That is right. In regard to emergency financial assistance, this figure may prove to be inadequate. An across-the-board stand has been made that the provision of services should be increased by 4 per cent. Therefore, last year's figure for emergency financial assistance has been increased by 4 per cent.

**Mr. LYNN ARNOLD:** In cash terms?

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** Yes. In the event, this may be very difficult indeed. I also referred earlier to a 6.5 per cent increase in cash terms and I have said that the Government believes that it can maintain the level of services on this figure and that it has determined that the level of services will be maintained. I outlined the steps

that have been taken to do this, namely, the setting up of a group to monitor the continued provision of the same welfare services that are in the Budget. I have said, and I stick to it, that if it does not prove to be possible to maintain that level of delivery of services, the Budget will suffer and not the delivery of services.

Regarding the various regions, this probably would have been fairly difficult for the honourable member, as it was for me, because in the past the figures have not been presented on a regional basis. This is the first time that they have been so presented and, in order to provide a basis for comparison, it was necessary to use approximate figures for the past, because the accounting had not then been prepared on this basis.

I now refer to the difference between the various regions. The degree of decentralisation of the department is most important and beneficial. This method of presenting the Budget (which, with programme performance budgeting, will be carried forward in future; this is a step towards it) has provided more useful information to members than it has in the past. This is a difficult and careful exercise, which the department is undertaking continuously to ensure that the right amount of money and service goes to each region.

In order to achieve that, social indicators are used carefully, and a survey is made frequently to ensure that each region gets the right amount of service. The regions referred to by the honourable member were Central Northern and Central Southern. They have been the two growth areas, and that is why there have been increases in those areas. The social indicators have told us that there is a growing need for welfare in those areas, whereas, for example, Central Western was a hold-fast situation. In some others, there has been a reduction.

**Mr. LYNN ARNOLD:** Such as in Central Western?

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** Yes. However, Central Northern and Central Southern have shown an increase. We maintain careful monitoring, and we carefully examine the need in each area, not only in money terms but also in terms of service provided, as between the different regions. The quarterly and monthly figures are available, and Mr. Cox can give them, as well as any further answer that he has for the honourable member.

**Mr. Cox:** A table relating to emergency financial assistance shows the number of clients each quarter and gives the total allocation for each of the district offices. That can be tabled and inserted in *Hansard*. I think that that would be the best way to do it.

**Mr. LYNN ARNOLD:** Yes.

**Mr. Cox:** The situation regarding emergency financial assistance is, and has been ever since I have been in South Australia, that there is also a great demand on the fund. The district officers have a local responsibility to ensure that what is provided to them goes through the year. In this table you will see how much the various district officers give per client. This is a helpful table to look at, as it differs from office to office.

Emergency financial assistance involves two difficulties, the first of which is that the amount that can be spent is unlimited, as there are people who really need a lot of money. However, to use emergency financial assistance to ensure that families which are really in trouble get enough to get out of that trouble and never come back is a prime way in which this money can be used. The table to which I have referred is as follows:

APPENDIX I  
EMERGENCY FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE—ALLOCATION USING 1980 S.I. DATA  
(excluding E/A to persons awaiting U/B)

Regions	Numbers of Clients					\$	\$/Client	% Total Expenditure
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total			
<b>CENTRAL WESTERN</b>								
Port Adelaide .....	131	114	168	165	578	12 690	21.96	3.18
The Parks .....	300	204	207	255	966	29 776	30.82	7.46
Woodville .....	250	291	373	371	1 285	29 741	23.15	7.45
Thebarton .....	276	403	367	431	1 477	26 899	18.21	6.79
Total .....	957	1 012	1 115	1 222	4 306	99 108	23.02	24.83
<b>CENTRAL EASTERN</b>								
Adelaide .....	403	213	347	319	1 282	22 391	17.47	5.60
Norwood .....	88	150	297	188	673	16 431	24.41	4.12
Campbelltown .....	58	72	94	56	280	8 769	31.32	2.20
The Hills .....	19	17	43	36	115	3 030	26.35	0.76
Total .....	568	452	731	599	2 350	50 621	21.54	12.68
<b>CENTRAL SOUTHERN</b>								
Marion Community Welfare Centre .....	95	91	149	164	499	16 136	32.34	4.04
Noarlunga Community Welfare Centre .....	43	125	282	354	804	26 418	32.86	6.62
Mitcham .....	29	26	51	34	140	3 942	28.16	0.99
Glenelg .....	95	88	132	195	510	9 567	18.76	2.40
Total .....	262	330	614	747	1 953	56 063	28.71	14.05
<b>CENTRAL NORTHERN</b>								
Elizabeth .....	724	515	1 312	958	2 509*	44 554	17.76	11.15
Salisbury .....	86	95	168	155	504	11 955	23.72	3.00
Enfield (includes Prospect B. Office) .....	247	210	206	334	997	21 287	21.35	5.33
Modbury .....	55	45	80	45	225	6 361	28.27	1.59
Nuriootpa .....	30	32	43	46	151	2 781	18.42	0.70
Gawler .....	74	133	72	126	405	9 095	22.46	2.28
Kadina .....	71	58	65	73	267	6 821	25.55	1.71
Total .....	1 287	1 088	1 946	1 737	5 058	102 854	20.33	25.76
<b>NORTHERN COUNTRY</b>								
Whyalla .....	108	124	184	211	627	14 891	23.75	3.73
Port Augusta .....	157	200	161	294	812	16 822	20.72	4.21
Ceduna .....	93	68	118	114	393	7 603	19.35	1.90
Port Lincoln .....	17	14	38	56	125	4 691	37.53	1.18
Port Pirie .....	30	56	38	83	207	4 784	23.11	1.20
Far North .....	25	40	47	77	189	7 311	38.68	1.83
Total .....	430	502	586	835	2 353	56 102	23.84	14.05
<b>SOUTHERN COUNTRY</b>								
Mount Gambier .....	63	62	69	81	275	9 770	35.53	2.45
Berri .....	55	117	402	265	839	12 402	14.78	3.11
Murray Bridge .....	142	86	90	122	440	12 244	27.83	3.07
Total .....	260	265	561	468	1 554	34 416	22.15	8.63
<b>TOTAL STATE</b> .....	<b>3 764</b>	<b>3 649</b>	<b>5 553</b>	<b>5 608</b>	<b>17 574</b>	<b>399 164</b>	<b>22.71</b>	<b>100.00</b>

\*includes "disaster relief" numbers per 1 000 cases.

I now refer to the matter of the \$1 100 000 mentioned by the honourable member. The sum of \$800 000 was transferred to the "Miscellaneous" vote, so the \$300 000 about which the honourable member is speaking regarding administration costs is fairly close to the sort of saving that must be made in relation to the department. There are certain areas of saving that do not show clearly because of the way in which the figures have been presented. Regional administration costs include consultants, and a large part relates to administration costs not for pays, time sheets, and that sort of thing, but for services.

So, our regional offices are service providers, and the consultations in those offices are expected to consult in specialised areas such as staff development, young offenders, or youth work. They are also expected to be involved in service projects within the region. Therefore, that figure does not relate to administration costs.

The matter of hold-fast areas is reflected in motor vehicle usage. We have in our department moved to four-cylinder cars, and have already taken steps in relation to reducing the quantity of fuel used. Over the past 12 months, instead of using 822 000 litres of fuel, we have been able to reduce usage of fuel by 100 000 litres. That is a significant saving in terms of cost, even though fuel prices have increased. It is in that sort of area that we have taken direct action.

There is one other area in which there has been a noticeable change, namely, the Magill Home for the Aged. We placed before the Public Works Standing Committee a request that we move to hostel-type accommodation rather than having too many infirmary wards there. That programme has been continuing for the past four or five years and obviously, once we establish people in hostels, it is not as expensive in terms of care by staff. This move is gradually having that effect.

The other interesting matter is the culmination of the computer programme for the collection of maintenance by the department. This has made a considerable difference in terms of the amount of clerical staff that is needed in this area.

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** I omitted to answer one part of the honourable member's question, which related to the sum of money spent on adoptions. The reason for this is that fewer children are available for adoption. Part of the reason for this is that, in the present social climate, more single parents of children are keeping the children and not placing them out for adoption. This happens to a much greater extent now because it is more acceptable (and so it should be) than it was 20 years ago. For this reason, fewer children are available for adoption.

Also, there is no doubt that the abortion figures show that fewer children are available for adoption. Otherwise, whatever one thinks about the matter, children who would otherwise be available for adoption would be born.

Finally, the use of artificial insemination has meant that fewer people in this area are seeking children for adoption. So, overall, there is less activity in this area. There is a long waiting list, but this is mainly because fewer children are available.

**Mr. LYNN ARNOLD:** What about the step-parents who want to adopt the children of their spouses?

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** The main adoption is in that area.

**Mr. LYNN ARNOLD:** That is the area about which I was speaking.

**The CHAIRMAN:** When we resume after lunch, the Committee will have 60 minutes with which to deal with this vote. I therefore ask Committee members and the Minister to bear that in mind. When we resume, the member for Salisbury will have the call.

*[Sitting suspended from 12.31 to 2 p.m.]*

**The CHAIRMAN:** I again refer to the suggested time allocated for community welfare discussion. One hour remains. I draw to the attention of the Committee that the "Miscellaneous" line is included.

**Mr. LYNN ARNOLD:** I had hoped that I could make the comments that I am now making before the adjournment and before the Director-General spoke, because one or two points were misunderstood by the Minister. I, too, misunderstood a point and presumed that the \$970 000 was included in the figures, and I acknowledge that that is not so. The Minister said that I initially indicated that certain areas were no longer dealt with in community welfare, and he suggested that I had forgotten that fact. I did not, and I will refer to the mathematics that I used to arrive at the figure, which has to be inflated by \$970 000. Actual payments last year were \$31 400 000 and, with an inflation rate of 10 per cent, that figure increases to \$34 400 000. This year we have a vote of \$27 400 000, which leaves a difference of \$7 000 000.

Taking out the income maintenance figure of \$4 300 000 referred to by the Minister, which he has indicated will be increased by \$970 000, one is left with \$2 700 000. One can then take away the sum of \$300 000 savings in the administration sector, and that sum is generally agreed. There is then a regional administration saving of \$20 000, and I acknowledge that it is difficult to have relevant figures this year, as this is the first year in which the figures have been broken down in relation to regional administration. There is then a branch office saving of \$300 000 and, deducting those figures from the \$2 700 000, one has \$2 080 000.

The Director-General stated that \$800 000 had been transferred to "Miscellaneous", and I accept that, but that leaves \$1 280 000 which requires explanation. I have made this explanation so that the Minister understands what items have been transferred, and I am sure he will agree with those figures. What has happened in that situation? The Minister said that Community Welfare Department emergency welfare assistance is tailored to need, and he indicated that the central, northern and southern regions have increasing allocations because they have increasing need, being fast-growing areas, which I accept.

He then said the central western region, because it is a more stable region with smaller population growth, had perhaps less need. His department has allocated a sum to provide for a lesser need by allocating only \$84 000. However, the growing need in that area is indicated by the vote and actual payments last year. The vote was \$87 000, which is \$3 000 more than this year's vote, but actual payments were \$99 000. Indeed, the western area seems to be showing as much of a need for emergency financial assistance as any other area.

The Minister said the budget would be topped up if necessary. I have to juxtapose that with the Director-General's comment this morning that his officers are told that what is apportioned for emergency financial assistance has to last throughout the year. Two opinions have been expressed—which is correct? Is it that, if the demand is there for emergency financial assistance, the budget will be topped up, or is the other statement correct, that it has to last throughout the year? What happens when the funds disappear?

The other area I mention is the adoption services. I am concerned about step-parents wishing to adopt children of their spouses. From information I have been given, there is a six to nine months wait, and that wait is becoming longer, I was informed by a member of the Minister's own office when I rang. I want a clear indication that the

Minister will give an undertaking that the waiting list for processing the adoption of children by a step-parent will not be longer than it already is: in other words, that that six to nine months waiting period which already exists will not become any longer, as was indicated by an officer of the Minister's department.

There has been a real cut in the budget of the Department of Community Welfare and I still cannot see how the \$1 280 000 we are talking about does not indicate real cuts in services. Emergency financial assistance and adoptions both show cuts in services. I do not believe that the Minister has refuted that. I am concerned about other services that will likewise be cut.

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** There has not been a cash cut; there has been a cash increase, as I said before, of \$6 500 000. Obviously, that is below the rate of inflation, which I acknowledged before. I said that the Government has a determination to maintain the level of delivery of welfare services. I have also said that we believe we can do that within this Budget figure. Further, I have said at least twice that, if this proves not to be possible, what will suffer will be the budget and not the delivery. I have mentioned the strategy set up to monitor this, the setting up of a group of officers (not all from the department) from senior level to observe the actual relationship between the delivery and welfare services within the budget, with the intention of maintaining the delivery of welfare services. The point that I think was mentioned in relation to emergency finance was that there were contradictory statements, namely, that on the one hand the level would be topped up when necessary and, on the other hand, the money is in the budget and that is it.

I think that the second case referred to last year. The reference was that when the money in the budget was spent that was it. This year there has been a tightening in the budget in all departments, not only in this one, and that is acknowledged. It is considered by the Government that there has to be a belt-tightening exercise and that there has to be restraint in all departments, especially in this one. It has been acknowledged that, because of the absolute need to maintain welfare services, additional money, if proved that it was not possible (and we do not believe this will be proven) to maintain the level of delivery of welfare services within the budget, will be found.

This applies in emergency financial assistance as well as in other areas. Generally speaking, in the past the expectation has been that the budget is there and you are expected to live within it. This has applied within emergency finance assistance, and this was the comment made in respect of the previous year, that when the money is spent it is gone. I ask Mr. Cox to reply to the other matters, particularly regarding the waiting period for adoptions, because there are some specific explanations for that.

**Mr. Cox:** In relation to the adoption waiting list, the six to nine months period is correct if we take an average: some are quicker and some are slower. The question of adoption into a new family is complicated, and it is on the increase for quite a number of families who do not need welfare services but could work through a solicitor, without coming to the department. We provide a free service, in some ways, and we are looking at what we need to do.

Regarding social reports on those matters, it is often extremely complicated, because family law matters are associated with the adoption of children and often there is opposition to the adoption, while there is no opposition to a child's living with a certain parent. The cases are never as clear as they look, and the matter is quite different from

the original adoption idea. It is a quickly-growing area that needs full consideration because of the way it is operating. The waiting time is there and we are conscious of it.

**Mr. LYNN ARNOLD:** I appreciate the Minister's comments about emergency financial assistance. I take it he is giving an undertaking that, if the demand is there, the funds will be provided, along with previous criteria established by the department, and that we will not, as members of Parliament, find ourselves confronted with information from constituents that district officers are having to say, "I am sorry, we cannot give you financial assistance, not because you do not qualify, but because we have no funds left."

Regarding the waiting time of six to nine months for adoption, I accept that these matters take time to process, but I want to ensure that that period will not increase. I have to ask that because I have been told by an officer in the Minister's department that it will increase. Next year, in Estimates Committee or if we are back in the House, I will be asking about the average time taken to process adoptions of the kind about which I have spoken. If the time is longer, I will want to know why. If we accept six to nine months as the time taken to process a case, that is fair enough, but I cannot think that the time will increase in the year ahead.

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** I cannot give any guarantee that the period will not increase. It may decrease. It will depend on the nature of the demands, the nature of the applications, the number of children for adoption, and so on. It is very much an *ad hoc* matter, as was the member's earlier question on family assistance, because this is flexible. The guidelines are very broad and, if the member has had time (which he may not have had) to read Professor Mann's report—

**Mr. LYNN ARNOLD:** I only got it yesterday.

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** I know that. That had nothing to do with this Committee. The report was released as soon as it was available. Professor Mann has criticised the fact that the guidelines for emergency financial assistance are not more rigid, and he claims that different district officers interpret them in different ways. He claims that there ought to be a greater measure of definition. Whilst it may be possible, as with all the other 90 recommendations, we will be looking at this. It may be possible to tighten the guidelines and get a measure of uniformity, but emergency assistance is not family maintenance. The question of whether it is administered in different ways and with different guidelines depends on how one looks at the matter.

Looking at it from the viewpoint of a client, it may appear to be inconsistent but if one looks at it from the viewpoint of a social welfare worker, it may not be inconsistent at all. As I have said, it is not income maintenance. There may be a family which seeks emergency financial assistance where it is a long-term problem. It is not a matter of something to pay the gas bill or anything like that. It is that kind of thing which is intended to be covered by emergency financial assistance. The emergency financial assistance is likely to be granted in a case where the payment is likely to rehabilitate the person, to get the person out of his or her troubles so that he or she will be able to operate normally thereafter.

If the problem is a long-term one, paying the gas bill or whatever is not likely to provide the answer, as they will be in trouble again the next week. In that kind of situation the assistance is not likely to be granted. That is why I say that, when there are complaints about inconsistency in the guidelines for emergency financial assistance, it depends on which viewpoint one takes—the viewpoint of the client or the viewpoint of the officer.

Where there is a long-term problem and we pay the gas bill or whatever, there may be problems in the future. The answer surely is to encourage the client to use our budgetary advice service or something of that kind. The answer is difficult. I cannot give any guarantee, as I said before in regard to adoptions, that there will not be complaints in particular areas. I guess that there have always been complaints and always will be complaints. Many of them are from the viewpoint of the client. The client knows that he has not got the money, so he does the logical thing and goes to his local member and complains. I cannot guarantee that there will not be any of these complaints in the future but I do recognise the tightness of the 4 per cent increase in the total finance for emergency financial assistance and I will be looking at that very closely.

**Mr. LYNN ARNOLD:** I did say that I would not make another comment but I would like to make one. The Minister inferred that I was arguing about cases of inconsistency in applications for emergency assistance. What I am saying is that, if a client with a certain set of specifications of financial need goes to a district office in July at the start of the financial year and is given financial assistance of a certain magnitude and then a similar client with identical (as far as possible) financial needs goes in June at the end of the financial year, can he be reasonably sure of receiving the same order of financial assistance because the criterion for assessing it would be the same? He or she should not be met with the answer, "I am sorry—funds have run out." In other words, I want the

officers to be consistent right through the calendar year; the guidelines will still have applied and, if the need is there, the funds will be there.

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** I take the honourable member's point. That is what I was saying before. Whilst it is difficult to say in an individual case whether the needs are the same and whether the same guidelines apply, it is certainly my intention that there will not be any saying, at the end of March, that the funds have run out.

**Mr. LYNN ARNOLD:** That is what I wanted to know.

**Mr. GLAZBROOK:** I would like to address a series of questions on the line "Residential Care Facilities", which include assessment centres, youth hostels and other establishments under the department's care and control. Will the Minister give the Committee some indication of the administration costs of these various establishments? They do not appear as a single accountable item in the Budget estimates. The only reference that I have been able to find, apart from one or two establishments, is that on page 533 of the programme papers, where it refers to institutional care, including the South Australian Youth Remand and Assessment Centre, Glandore, and the South Australian Youth Training Centre at Lochiel Park.

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** This information is always detailed in the department's annual report, which has not, of course, yet been tabled. However, I have these figures and, with your permission, Sir, I table them and ask that they be inserted in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Treasury Line	1979-80			1980-81		
	Salaries	Operating	Total	Salaries	Operating	Total
<b>REGION: CENTRAL NORTHERN</b>						
<i>Residential Care</i>						
Admission Unit .....	118 906	15 346	134 252	116 100	12 700	128 800
Group Home .....	108 984	12 041	121 025	91 400	11 700	103 100
Elizabeth Family Home .....	—	1 408	1 408	—	1 300	1 300
Gilles Plains Community Unit .....	106 274	13 514	119 788	98 600	13 200	111 800
Kadina Family Home .....	—	52	52	—	—	—
	334 164	42 361	376 525	306 100	38 900	345 000
<b>REGION: CENTRAL WESTERN</b>						
<i>Residential Care</i>						
Regional Admission Unit .....	171 238	15 986	187 224	149 900	12 800	162 700
Group Home .....	—	1 454	1 454	50 000	10 200	60 200
Hay Cottage .....	116 883	10 417	127 300	108 400	10 800	119 200
Largs Bay Family Home .....	—	615	615	—	600	600
Closed Cottage .....	—	4 006	4 006	—	—	—
	288 121	32 478	320 599	308 300	34 400	342 700
<b>REGION: CENTRAL SOUTHERN</b>						
<i>Residential Care</i>						
Regional Admission Unit .....	131 117	14 008	145 125	111 600	13 600	125 200
Group Home .....	116 700	14 495	131 195	86 200	14 100	100 300
Colebrook Family Home .....	—	636	636	—	600	600
Glandore Community Unit .....	121 794	8 805	130 599	102 600	9 200	111 800
Glenelg Home Care Unit .....	9 737	—	9 737	10 500	—	10 500
Kandarik .....	123 227	12 990	136 217	118 100	12 600	130 700
Naldera Family Home .....	—	827	827	—	800	800
Marion Units (Flats) .....	102 040	16 904	118 944	99 800	16 400	116 200
Plympton Home Care Unit .....	15 419	—	15 419	16 600	—	16 600
Seaford Youth Services Unit .....	62 209	7 808	70 017	78 300	11 100	89 400
Slade .....	105 131	13 744	118 875	97 800	13 400	111 200
Closed Cottages .....	—	423	423	—	—	—
	787 374	90 640	878 014	721 500	91 800	813 300

Treasury Line	1979-80			1980-81		
	Salaries	Operating	Total	Salaries	Operating	Total
REGION: CENTRAL EASTERN	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
<i>Residential Care</i>						
Bridgewater Home Care Unit .....	24 125	—	24 125	24 700	—	24 700
Colton Cottage .....	81 569	12 771	94 340	75 800	12 400	88 200
Klemzig Home .....	55 162	8 590	63 752	55 300	7 600	62 900
Kumanka .....	90 554	11 770	102 324	—	—	—
Stuart House .....	108 672	26 373	135 045	97 200	23 900	121 100
Woorabinda .....	11 217	4 824	16 041	21 500	4 700	26 200
Closed Cottages .....	47 604	9 997	57 601	—	—	—
	418 903	74 325	493 228	274 500	48 600	323 100
REGION: NORTHERN COUNTRY REGION						
<i>Residential Care</i>						
Ceduna Amenities .....	3 901	2 640	6 541	4 000	2 500	6 500
Ceduna Family Home .....	—	1 375	1 375	—	1 200	1 200
Port Lincoln Family Home .....	—	893	893	—	900	900
Port Pirie Family Home .....	—	768	768	—	800	800
Pybus Family Home .....	—	928	928	—	900	900
Whyalla Family Home .....	—	3 280	3 280	—	3 200	3 200
Closed Reserves .....	9 939	3 437	13 376	—	—	—
Dartmouth Family Home .....	—	1 260	1 260	—	1 200	1 200
	13 840	14 581	28 421	4 000	10 700	14 700
REGION: SOUTHERN COUNTRY REGION						
<i>Residential Care</i>						
Renmark Family Home .....	—	1 367	1 367	—	1 300	1 300

**Mr. GLAZBROOK:** My question relates to the cost of the various institutions, and I refer particularly to the Marion unit flats.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! There is no line to which this matter relates in the vote for the Department for Community Welfare. Some of it may come under the "Miscellaneous" heading.

**Mr. GLAZBROOK:** No, this is a matter of policy. My question relates to the cost of that establishment and to the policy relating to the return of fees as incentives. What was the cost to the department of the incentives and of the additional incentives that have been given under that programme?

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** I do not think that my officers can provide me with that information at the moment. The estimated cost of running the Marion unit flats in 1980-81 is \$116 200. I do not think that we have the kind of breakdown that the honourable member wants. Mr. Harris may be able to give it but, if he cannot, I will obtain the information for the honourable member.

**Mr. Harris:** I cannot give the Committee the details that have been requested, but I will obtain them for the honourable member.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Will you forward those details to the Committee?

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** Yes.

**Mr. GLAZBROOK:** Will the Minister say whether, as a matter of policy, the department has, or intends to have, an internal audit scheme relating to manpower resources, fiscal matters and work performance programmes?

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** The Government instituted an internal audit system for the first time this year, and this department is one of three departments in which it has been initiated.

**Mr. GLAZBROOK:** How many personnel are involved in the exercise, and do they cover manpower resources, fiscal matters and work performance programmes?

**Mr. Cox:** The department has had review mechanisms for the past few years in regard to this kind of thing, and, because of that, we have been able to do cost cases for the Budget. The department is one of three departments

chosen for the internal audit programme and three officers will be involved. Internal audit works directly and can inquire into anything like salaries, wages or administrative costs that are processed in the department. The work will be far ranging. As a first step in an experimental programme of internal auditing in the State, there will be a direct relationship with the Public Service Board and the Treasury. The external auditor will know what the internal auditor is looking at, and there will be co-operation in that field.

**Mr. GLAZBROOK:** I refer to another theme—

**The CHAIRMAN:** You cannot refer to another subject.

**Mr. GLAZBROOK:** With due respect, because we have been asked to finish by 3 p.m., I seek leave to continue questioning, because I want to ask other questions.

**The CHAIRMAN:** You cannot refer to another line.

**Mr. GLAZBROOK:** We will not finish by 3 p.m.

**The CHAIRMAN:** If the Committee has not completed its questioning, that is flexible—it is up to the Committee.

**Mr. GLAZBROOK:** We did not find this in Estimates Committee A.

**The CHAIRMAN:** This procedure has been adopted by this Committee.

**Dr. BILLARD:** Mr. Glazbrook is only the second person on this side who has asked questions.

**The CHAIRMAN:** At the start of proceedings today, I outlined that a member would be able to pursue a subject, and that one subject only, until it was completed. I realise that earlier matters were fairly broad and a fair amount of latitude was given. I have followed this procedure in regard to the member for Brighton: he has asked questions about policy. I point out that I allowed a fair amount of latitude in that case, because the financial aspects associated with children's and youth homes are covered under "Miscellaneous".

**Mr. GLAZBROOK:** It is not under "Miscellaneous", with due respect.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I ask the member where it is if it is not under "Miscellaneous".

**Dr. BILLARD:** It is under "Centralised Facilities and Services".

**The CHAIRMAN:** The honourable member said that, in his opinion, the grants for the running of organisations like youth homes and women's shelters come under "Miscellaneous".

**Mr. GLAZBROOK:** I did not say "Miscellaneous"; I mentioned that they were referred to on page 533 of the programme papers.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The honourable member said that he wanted to change the theme.

**Mr. GLAZBROOK:** But I did not want to change from policy matters.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The procedure that has been adopted by this Committee is that members must wait for another call if they want to change the subject. The questions that were asked from my left related to overall financial aspects.

**Mr. GLAZBROOK:** My questions related to the overall policy.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The honourable member may ask his question: we have wasted five minutes of the Committee's time.

**Mr. GLAZBROOK:** In regard to the policy of the establishments to which young people go, I refer to the report of the Community Welfare Advisory Committee that was completed in July and published recently. There was an item regarding the young offenders section referring to this subject.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I will allow the honourable member half a minute.

**Mr. ABBOTT:** On a point of order, Mr. Chairman, the member is introducing an entirely new matter which does not follow from his previous question.

**Mr. GLAZBROOK:** I am still referring to young offenders, homes and institutions, which is totally related.

**The CHAIRMAN:** In regard to the point of order, I will allow the member's question if it is associated with homes and staff in homes.

**Mr. GLAZBROOK:** I refer to the "Report of the Community Welfare Advisory Committee on the Delivery of Community Welfare Services in South Australia". In the last line on page 104 under the heading "Young Offenders" it is indicated that the committee did not make a detailed study of that area of the department's work. In the first paragraph on page 105, it is claimed that the report on services for young offenders was asked for in the mid-1970's. Professor Rosemary Sarri, of the University of Michigan in the U.S., was a visiting Fulbright Scholar to South Australia and conducted that survey. I note that the findings are not yet available and I have concluded that perhaps, in the intervening period, changes may have taken place and that the findings that may have come from the survey undertaken by Professor Sarri may need to be re-examined in terms of their accommodation and the areas in which young offenders are placed. Can the Minister say whether there is any provision in the Budget for a continuation of this situation or for an updated study, because I feel it has some relevance to the accommodation of young offenders?

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** The facilities that we were able to extend to the Mann Committee for research were limited. The committee was instructed to carry out an overall survey on the basis of consulting the opinions of clients of our services. There are three or four phases of the inquiry, but a request was made for a detailed survey in a few areas as a sample. One of these was not young offenders. One of the reasons why they did not find that to be one of the few areas where they were able to research in detail was the reason given in the report. The reason for the report of Professor Sarri, who was really a first-class researcher in this area and whose ideas are much

respected, was that the tape on which she recorded her findings was not compatible with what is available in South Australia. We are expecting to be able to get that report from her. It is not presently envisaged to be necessary to conduct a detailed survey in that area. Possibly Mr. Harris has something he would like to add in regard to what the member said.

**Mr. Harris:** True, some of the functions and units within the centres have changed since the survey was undertaken by Dr. Sarri. Vaughan House, at Enfield, was an establishment for girl offenders and has become the South Australian Youth Remand Assessment Centre with a population involving two detention centres, one for boys and one for girls, and assessment and remand units. Additionally, there have been similar changes within the South Australian Youth Training Centre at Magill that was formerly known as McNally. They have divided into somewhat different units, and the functions of those units have again changed. The units at the South Australian Youth Training Centre at Magill are mainly for offenders and youths who are on remand but who have previously been to that centre. They would again go back to that centre. There have been changes in those units in that time. There has also been a marked development of the provisions within the community to handle young offenders. Youth project services have been established in most regions, and supervisors of young offenders have been appointed to implement a range of services for young offenders in that region.

**Mr. GLAZBROOK:** In the department's desire to assist in the area of family care and residential centres—

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** Do you mean family day care?

**Mr. GLAZBROOK:** I refer to residential care in relation to problems with children, and I understand that conflict has been encountered with local government. I understand that in the past some centres have been moved because of pressures from residential groups, councils, and others. Has the department taken action to spend more time in educating local government and residents in housing centres, or in areas where they are planned or where they have been moved because of pressure from school groups?

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** The department always tries to work in conjunction with local government, and it always tries to be sensitive to representations made on behalf of residents. Certainly, there have been occasions where we have acted on that basis. It is often necessary for the department to get the necessary approval first before some sort of administration unit or other unit is established. It is a fact of life that young offenders and other young people with behavioural problems have to be helped. Members will have realised from what has been said that we try as much as possible to see that they are helped in ways other than residential care, but some of them must be placed in residential care. A problem one encounters in this kind of situation is that members of the community acknowledge that some children with behavioural problems and the like, have to be cared for in a residential situation, but they do not want that to happen in their street or suburb.

The matter raised by the member is important and is one of the problems facing the department. While people at large say that little so-and-so has to be looked after, and looked after in a residential setting, it should not be next to them. It is not always easy to accommodate this. I can give the member every assurance that we try to take into account the views expressed by local government and residents.

**Mr. ABBOTT:** I would like to ask several questions in relation to family impact statements. Did the department conduct a family impact statement on the Estimates for

this department? The Estimates contain major administrative decisions in a wide range of areas. The Minister and his officers will agree that this is a time when we have record levels of unemployment and that there are about 2 000 000 people throughout Australia living on or below the poverty line, that the number of homeless youths is continuing to grow, and that the number of demands made on the department is also continuing to grow.

Unless we have adequate finance and facilities, it will have a devastating effect upon these families and individuals. I therefore ask the Minister whether a family impact statement was prepared. If not, why not? And, if so, was the statement considered by Cabinet, and what were the details and findings of that statement?

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** The nature of the family impact statement, although we have tried to explain it on many occasions, still seems to be misunderstood. The requirement is that a family impact statement be attached to every submission to Cabinet whether it is to give planning approval for an ice-skating rink, or whatever it may be. Every submission has to contain either a summary of the family impact statement or a statement certified by the Minister in his Cabinet submission that the proposal is not suitable for family impact assessment. It is each department that submits such matters to Cabinet that is responsible for preparing the family impact statement. All family impact statements are not prepared by my department, which devised them. The format was approved by Cabinet. Cabinet also approved the change in the format of Cabinet submissions, namely, that future ones had to contain a summary of the family impact statement or a statement that the proposal was not suitable for family impact assessment.

Officers of the Family Research Unit that I set up in my department conducted seminars for various Government departments in groups to have discussions with them and to advise them on how family impact statements ought to be prepared, but it is not my department that prepares them: it is individual departments. Also, the Family Research Unit can be consulted by other departments if they have difficulties. I know from my other department, the Department of Consumer Affairs, that that is frequently done. The family impact statement is prepared by the individual department putting up the Cabinet submission. The Budget was put up by Treasury and not by departments; therefore, there is no family impact statement from my department. In fact, the statement was made regarding the Budget that in lots of areas it could impact upon families, but it would hold up the Budget completely if there had to be a family impact statement for each line and each part of the detail of the Budget, so because the Budget did not come from my department there is no family impact statement from that department.

The honourable member raised the question basically of youth homelessness, referring to the number of unemployed young people who do not have homes. I think I should add that the Government set up a working party into youth homelessness which has reported. The report has been sent to a subcommittee of Cabinet, of which I am a member, to be looked at before the question of its release is considered.

**Mr. ABBOTT:** I am not altogether happy with the situation, or with the reply given by the Minister. I believe that what the Minister has said constitutes a broken election promise. Let me read what was said in relation to family impact statements in his Parliamentary election policy speech, as follows:

The Liberal Government acknowledges the impact on the family of administrative and legislative decisions taken in a wide range of areas. We believe that government and the

community should constantly be aware of the importance of protecting the family from any undesirable effects which may flow from these decisions. Therefore, we will institute a system of family impact statements under relevant State legislation and major administrative decisions will be examined with a view to ensuring that such legislation and decisions have no adverse consequence for the family.

In answer to my previous question, the Minister said that no family impact statement was prepared so far as the Budget line relating to the Department of Community Welfare was concerned. I think that is contrary to the policy statement implication. How can the community be aware of any undesirable effects of Government decisions if it is not told about them? How do we as an Opposition make any judgment as to the effectiveness of these statements? How do we know whether these family impact statements are a worthwhile scheme if we are not told about them? There must be a cost factor involved for every Government department. When this scheme was introduced there was a lot of flag waving and publicity—it was a world-beater scheme, etc.—but we do not know any detail about it. Will the Minister consider this matter, or is there something to hide?

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** There is certainly nothing to hide. The scheme has been working most effectively. In the first place, there is no question of any broken promise. It was not only the lines of the Department for Community Welfare but every line that could have some effect on the family, so in the case of the Budget it was not possible to prepare a family impact statement. I have been pleased to see summaries of the statements annexed to Cabinet submissions. I think that, in general, they have been very effective. The honourable member has acknowledged that this scheme is new. There are Washington family impact statements, but they assess impact on a family after something has gone wrong. We have not been able to discover, nor have Professors Kahn or Kammerman discovered, any other method of assessing family impact at the decision-making stage.

We have acknowledged, because this is new, that there are likely to be some bugs and in the Cabinet submission, which was approved, we provided for a review before the end of 1980. That review is being undertaken by the Family Research Unit at present and will be put to Cabinet when it is completed. I do not think that the honourable member is justified in saying that the Opposition has not been given any details. I think we have had a lot of publicity about this matter at all stages, and we have stated fairly clearly and fully (and I have stated this many times on public platforms) what the nature of the process was.

**Mr. ABBOTT:** Give us some examples.

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** All right. That is one of the matters up for review. The procedure which has been adopted so far has been, in my view, a sensible and intimate inter-departmental procedure. The family impact statement is part of the matter put by the department; it is confidential to the department and is part of the matter put to the Minister and Cabinet. There have been two matters which I have intimated to the Family Research Unit have to be looked at as part of the review, including the question of public release, which has been raised from time to time.

I have felt that the kinds of intimate family impact statement done on minor issues like planning decisions are confidential to the department and should not be released. The question of whether any are released is for the department to decide. If any are released, that is likely to create a precedent, and I have acknowledged this as being a difficulty. We initially drew an analogy between family impact statements and environmental impact statements.

Environmental impact statements are independently conducted and are open to the public.

One thing that I have asked the Family Research Unit to look at is whether it is appropriate to have two classes of family impact statement, one being on general matters and matters of public importance that ought to be undertaken independently of the department, while we still retain the intimate kind of family impact statement on whether you have an ice-skating rink, or something like that.

The other matter that needs resolution is why a family impact statement need not be annexed if it is certified by the Minister that it is not appropriate for assessment. There has been inconsistency. If we are appointing members to the board of the Electricity Trust, that is not suitable for family assessment. I believe that this matter has been administered inconsistently in some departments. These points are being looked at during the review, and that may resolve the matters that the member has raised. He probably would have seen in the press the report of the venture that we are undertaking, together with the Institute of Family Studies set up under the Family Law Act. This will be looked at during the exercise from the point of view of what the families themselves want raised.

**Mr. ABBOTT:** I do not know whether the Minister is prepared to provide sample documents on family impact statements. What is the total number of family impact statements that Cabinet has dealt with since the introduction of the scheme, and how many of these statements have affected or altered Cabinet decisions?

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** The member probably has seen the handbook.

**Mr. ABBOTT:** Yes.

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** Until the review is held the position is that family impact statements are confidential to the department. I cannot, on a general basis, make documents available. I ask the member to contact me and I should think it would be possible, during the review period, to have access to the Family Research Unit and see some sample documents. I do not know the total number that has gone to Cabinet. The Family Research Unit does not have the figures and I have not kept a record. The number would be about 20 a week.

It is difficult to know to what extent the family impact statement has an effect on the Cabinet decision, but I have been pleased at the extent to which Cabinet has been influenced by the statements. I have been pleased to note that, when a matter has been put up without a family impact statement, it has been sent back, and that the matter is arousing Cabinet about the needs of the family.

**Mr. ABBOTT:** I asked for the number of administrative and legislative decisions that have been altered by Cabinet as a result of these statements.

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** It is not possible to say. That is never documented. The family impact statement is part of the matter put to Cabinet, like other matters. It is not possible to say what proportion is altered by Cabinet. I thought I gave the member my impression of how useful the statements have been.

**Mr. ABBOTT:** How many Government departments have sought assistance from the Department for Community Welfare in order to prepare their statements or assessments? Is any training in social evaluation being undertaken by other Government departments and, if not, why not? How many consultations have been held with the Family Research Unit that offers help to other departments in such evaluations?

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** I understand that the model used is that the Family Research Unit of my department has held seminars of other departments in groups. I cannot

say what number of other departments has sought help regarding individual family impact statements, but I would say that the number would be high. I can think of about only one that has not. Some other departments, those that obviously have particular need to have regard to social impact, do have this within their own expertise. The Department of Planning is notably one of those. Generally speaking, the unit in my department has been the unit to conduct statements on family impact and family assessment.

**Mr. MATHWIN:** I refer to regional administration. For the Central Northern Region, which the Minister would know is at Salisbury, there is an increase from \$204 734 to \$253 600. In the Auditor-General's Report, at page 49, in relation to salaries and wages—

**Mr. LYNN ARNOLD:** I rise on a point of order. The member for Glenelg has said that the Central Northern Region is at Salisbury. That is incorrect. It stretches from Campbelltown to Munno Para.

**The CHAIRMAN:** There is no point of order.

**Mr. MATHWIN:** I understand that the Central Northern Region is based at Salisbury, the Central Southern Region at Glandore, and the Central Eastern Region at Campbelltown.

**Mr. LYNN ARNOLD:** The Central Northern Region goes down to Campbelltown.

**Mr. MATHWIN:** In the Budget documents, we have salaries and wages for this year but not for last year, although we have the vote. We must look at the Auditor-General's Report. We see that, for the Central Northern Region, which is situated at Salisbury, the amount for salaries and wages was \$1 400 000.

The Central Southern Region, which is situated at Glandore, had a wages and salary bill in 1979 of \$1 758 000. The reason why I have brought these matters up is that, in the Central Southern Region, the wages and salary bill has decreased, because the proposed wages and salaries amount this year is \$1 687 900. In the Central Northern Region (which we know is based in Salisbury) the wages and salary bill last year was \$1 400 000 and the amount proposed this year is \$1 805 500, which is an increase (with all due respect to the great calculators of the Committee) of approximately \$500 000.

Will the Minister give the reason for this increase? Is there a greater concentration of staff? Is it intended that this office will have more qualified staff? Is it because that area needs more servicing and has more problems?

**Mr. McRae:** You hit the jackpot, John.

**Mr. MATHWIN:** It has more problems? Is it a fact that we are going to put community service orders into operation in that area? I suggest to the Minister that there are great problems in the Central Southern Region. If we are going to have a reduction in costing I would hope that we are not going to have a reduction in the qualifications of the staff. I would like a rundown on staff and the situation in both offices.

It appears that the numbers could well increase in the near future because of an increasing problem, as seen by a number of people, that will aggravate the situation that now exists in regard to young people and delinquents having problems with the law. Presently we have people who are advising these young people not to make any plea at all in court so that the court cannot regard them as being guilty. In the adult court if there is no plea at all one is immediately regarded as pleading not guilty. The department, along with others, has to face up to the problem, which has to increase, and it will increase not only in the Central Northern Region but also in the Central Southern Region. Will the Minister give details of the nature of any staff changes in this connection?

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** I have already foreshadowed the answer to that question. In regard to regionalisation and the split-up between the regulations of the various portions of the Budget, it has been very difficult for honourable members because, in the past, the Budget was not regionalised. It is the first Budget that has been presented on that basis. While we did provide the figures for the past as a basis for comparison, sometimes it was difficult and sometimes inappropriate to present the figures on that basis.

The other answer is that I have already indicated (and there has been an increase in the Budget for the Central Southern Region, not a decrease) that social indicators have been used to establish the need within each region. These have shown that the greatest growth areas of need have been the Central Northern and Central Southern Regions. There has been a need for further input. The determination has not been made on any other basis, but simply that one. We monitor very carefully the needs between the various regions and, if it is found that there is an increase in the need in Central Southern Region, that will be met; funds are switched from one region to another if that proves to be necessary. It is monitored carefully. The growth areas in the central regions have been the Central Northern and Central Southern Regions, which have been catered for in this Budget. Mr. Cox may be able to elaborate on these matters.

**Mr. Cox:** There are two matters that I would like to refer to; first, the level of community welfare staff that will be available throughout the State. Last year there were 267½ base rate social workers in the community. This year, at the time of the Budget, there were 277. So, it is a basic increase of 10 staff over a period. Vacancies have been filled and it is not difficult to get social workers. For social workers classified SW4, in July 1979 there were 56½ and in July 1980 in the field there were 63½. There has been an increase in the number of staff in the field because of the availability of social workers and because there is less need to carry those vacancies.

Secondly, the reallocation of staff to areas where there is need is always difficult in a department, because nobody wants to lose staff from a particular area. However, there has been a reallocation of staff to the metropolitan southern and metropolitan northern regions to try and balance out the pressures that have been felt there.

**Mr. ABBOTT:** In view of the slow progress that has been made on these lines and taking into account the tremendous amount of work that my colleagues on this side and the Minister and his staff have put into the preparation for the discussions in this Committee, we are prepared to continue until 3.30.

**Mr. MATHWIN:** We on the Government side are quite prepared to do that, because of the colossal amount of work that members on this side have put into it.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! This morning there was no objection to a suggestion that it be 3 p.m. Now the suggestion has been put forward that it be 3.30. Are there any objections?

**Mr. GLAZBROOK:** The only objection I make is that I was put off from asking two questions because of your ruling, Mr. Chairman, that they were not on the same subject. I would hate to think that I will still not be able to get my questions in if 3.30 comes. I understand this to be an agreement between one side and the other but I also believe that we should be able to ask questions of the Minister irrespective of whether 3.30 is reached or not. It may be that the questions are finished before that time or it may be that they are not finished until 3.35 or 3.40. However, I believe that they should be asked.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The honourable member's point is

taken. I would also like him to understand that there could be quite a few other members of the Committee who feel the same way. I have no authority to say it will conclude at 3.30. I am in the hands of the Committee and, if any member does not wish to abide by the suggested time, it is up to that member. However, I appeal to members, in the interests of the Committee and in the interests of getting as much information as possible on the whole of the lines, that they give serious consideration to agreeing to this suggestion.

**Mr. OSWALD:** I would be happy to proceed to 3.30 but I point out that members on this side have a few questions on the Miscellaneous column. We would appreciate the opportunity of asking those questions this afternoon.

**The CHAIRMAN:** It is up to the Committee. I can only appeal, this request having been made, for some consideration to be given to the Miscellaneous vote. I ask members to make their questions brief and the Minister to make his replies as brief as possible.

**Mr. HAMILTON:** How much money has been provided in the Budget to encourage the provision of easily-accessible multi-purpose information centres located in key centres?

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** Generally speaking, multi-purpose information centres come under the Department of Local Government, not under this department. I do not know whether Mr. Cox can add anything to that.

**Mr. Cox:** I have nothing further to add.

**Mr. HAMILTON:** What Budget support is there to extend programmes designed to maintain an independence of elderly people from institutions?

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** That is an area at which we have been looking in conjunction with the Commonwealth Government. We are looking at a special programme to assist the elderly, and the area of enabling elderly people to remain in their own homes instead of being institutionalised is being examined. Some grants are made in that area, of which Mr. Cox can give details.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Are those grants associated with the "Miscellaneous" lines?

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** Yes.

**The CHAIRMAN:** That matter will, therefore, have to be left until the Committee is considering the "Miscellaneous" line.

**Mr. HAMILTON:** The Liberal Party policy announced in August 1979 contained the following:

We believe that first priority in assistance should go to the most disadvantaged.

Has the Minister been able to ascertain those areas that are most disadvantaged; what areas are they; and what priority has the Minister given to those areas?

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** They are shown by the social indicators to which I have referred and which are applied across the board. I am unable to say who has been established as the most disadvantaged, as this varies in different areas.

In reply to the honourable member's other question, when the honourable member gets the time (which he has not yet had) to read the Mann Report, he will find that it refers to the people who are said to be the most disadvantaged. We are quite sincere about the policy statement. There is no point in giving welfare assistance to people who are not disadvantaged, and we are very much in the business of establishing those who are the most disadvantaged.

**Mr. GLAZBROOK:** I find it somewhat difficult to pick up the total costs of one or two items. Would the Minister give me an extract of the total cost of juvenile care, split into, first, Government service juvenile care and, secondly, the area covering subsidies to private organisa-

tions? Also, will he say what percentage of the total Budget this comprises?

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** Grants made to non-government children's and youth homes come within the "Miscellaneous" line, and the sum of \$927 000 is provided, to which another \$31 000 is to be added. Regarding departmental residential care, the information is provided in the document that I tabled earlier.

**Mr. GLAZBROOK:** I do not know whether the Minister has misunderstood what I asked. I should like to ascertain the total cost of juvenile programmes. Of the total \$42 000 000 Budget, how much is spent on juveniles and juvenile care, compared to what is spent on adult welfare? I should also like to know the extent of voluntary, as compared to Government, expenditure.

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** I understand now what the honourable member wants. It is not possible to give this figure. Care relating to children includes the INC scheme, secure care centres and all sorts of different programmes, and it would be necessary to add the various allocations. The answer cannot be given at the moment to the second part of the honourable member's question. I understood that the honourable member wanted the different percentages between the Government sector and what the honourable member has called the voluntary sector, which is better called the non-government sector, because people are employed therein. Those figures would have to be totalled up from a great number of different sections. However, I will see that that information is provided.

**Mr. GLAZBROOK:** It has been stated that the cost of maintaining a prisoner at Yatala is about \$13 000 a year, while the cost of secure care for children has been stated to be \$42 000 a year for each child. Will the Minister say why there is such a difference in costs?

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** In general terms, I should have thought (and Mr. Harris, in whose specialised area this matter falls, can doubtless add to this) that the answer was fairly obvious. Although trying to rehabilitate adults is laudable and is, indeed, undertaken, children are children and need an education, for which reason teachers are seconded to training institutions. Those teachers are paid for within this department and are included in the ratio.

We also have craft training, which children need to a much greater extent than do adults. Also, they are merely children. One could hope that adults would, broadly speaking, look after themselves, but children need care as well as training. This discrepancy is broadly explained by the fact that children, many of whom have learning disabilities, need teaching.

There must therefore be a tight teacher-pupil relationship (a much higher percentage of teachers to students) than applies in ordinary schools. This is done in order to ensure that these children get an education that will enable them to become good citizens and to ensure that they are cared for. Therefore, in relation to children, there is clearly a greater difference in the ratio of staff to residents than is the case in relation to adult care.

**Mr. Harris:** As the Minister has said, there is a higher ratio of staff in the children's centres. Secondly, attempts have been made to deal in the community with most of the young offenders who are not a risk to themselves and who are not a severe risk to the community. This substantially reduces the numbers under care in major institutions so that the cost per child is greater, together with the need, because it is a caring situation as distinct from a custodian situation. There is also a higher staff component in dealing with children than with adults. I refer to the general agreements with the staff associations about the level of staffing that should be available in dealing with certain groups of children.

To reduce the cost per head we would have to substantially reduce the number in order to move a staff unit out into the community to provide further community care. In brief, that is the answer.

**Mr. PLUNKETT:** I have two questions. One concerns youth accommodation and the other—

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! They are separate questions, and the member can only ask one question. That has been the ruling of the Committee to this stage.

**Mr. PLUNKETT:** In regard to *Spark*, the Council for the Single Mother and Child, in that organisation's newsletter it complains that last year it received only \$11 000 to cover two salaries, and now no allocation seems to be made. The Victorian counterpart of this organisation has \$70 000 in the bank, which has been mainly provided by the Hamer Government. What allocation will be made to this organisation?

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** This matter is covered in the Miscellaneous vote—

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! We will be moving to that line.

**Mr. PLUNKETT:** It appears that I have made a mistake, Mr. Chairman. I did intend to ask a question about residential care.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I rule that the question is out of order, but I will allow the member to ask the question relating to this line.

**Mr. PLUNKETT:** Can the Minister say what facilities are funded in relation to the Residential Care Advisory Committee? How many beds per 1 000 head of population are there for emergency youth accommodation and for medium-term (up to six months) youth accommodation? I refer to a schedule in relation to the Central Northern Region where no grant has been made, and no grant has been made to the Central Western Region.

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** There has been an increase in those funds but, to put it on a basis of each 1 000 head of population, we will have to produce those figures and make them available.

**Dr. BILLARD:** As the department makes contact with many people and has to keep records because people make contact on an irregular basis, I understand that the department has problems in maintaining records. I understand that moves are afoot in relation to computerisation of these records. What is planned? Does the Minister expect any improvements or savings in staff or cost?

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** We have been looking at computerisation in relation to two areas. One relates to the keeping of central records, a central index, and the other is children's records. Feasibility studies have been carried out and the board is considering our case. If the matter goes forward we hope that we will receive additional funding for this purpose. I cannot say what the timing is likely to be, but we have had recent discussions with the Public Service Board and we hope, particularly regarding the central index, which appears to be the more urgent of the two, that we will be able to put it on a computer basis shortly.

**The CHAIRMAN:** There being no further questions, I declare discussion on the vote to be completed.

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Minister of Community Welfare, Miscellaneous,  
\$14 852 000

**Chairman:**  
Mr. E. K. Russack

**Members:**

Mr. R. K. Abbott  
 Mr. Lynn Arnold  
 Dr. B. Billard  
 Mr. R. E. Glazbrook  
 Mr. K. C. Hamilton  
 Mr. J. Mathwin  
 Mr. J. K. G. Oswald  
 Mr. K. H. Plunkett

**Witness:**

The Hon. J. C. Burdett, Minister of Community Welfare and Minister of Consumer Affairs.

**Departmental Advisers:**

Mr. I. S. Cox, Director-General of Community Welfare.

Mr. C. E. M. Harris, Acting Deputy Director-General of Community Welfare.

Mr. J. A. Munchenberg, Director, Resource Services Division, Community Welfare Department.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I declare the proposed expenditures open for examination.

**Mr. ABBOTT:** In regard to transport concessions for the unemployed, the number of recipients of transport travel concession cards for the unemployed has obviously increased. How many concession cards for the unemployed were issued during 1979-80, including dependent spouses, and what is the current figure? Is any review of this scheme being considered by the department, either in relation to concessions for unemployed persons or the hours in which the unemployed are permitted free travel?

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** We do not have the figures, but I will provide them. We are undertaking a review, particularly in regard to the first matter. In regard to hours, I am not sure that we have taken that on board, but I will consider it.

**Mr. OSWALD:** I will try to be brief and not cut into the Opposition's time, but I have several questions under "Grants for welfare activities". There are a few items of concern that have not been mentioned elsewhere. I have a series of short questions, and I would like to know what action the department and the Government are going to take to promote the International Year of Disabled Persons through the department?

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** First, I indicate to the member, although he doubtless knows, that Ministerial responsibility for the International Year of Disabled Persons rests with the Attorney-General and not with me. The member asked what action the department intends to take and what initiatives we propose to undertake during 1981. First, we have appointed a project officer to promote the aims of the International Year of Disabled Persons within the Department. Secondly, we are conducting a general review of the department's services towards the disabled and we will consider how the department can more effectively meet the needs of the disabled.

This is important, because I do not think that we want any kind of apartheid to set disabled people apart from the rest: a disabled person, or child, mentally handicapped people and so on are, first of all, people. It is important that in our own department we look at the welfare of disabled persons instead of setting up some body to set them aside and treat them outside the general community. The review that we are undertaking will have particular emphasis on the department's services for the developmentally disabled, who were previously called intellectually retarded, children and their families. I have spoken to an organisation to sponsor those people this week.

The department is also participating in the Intellectually Retarded Persons Project, which is reviewing the Government's services towards the developmentally disabled. The Community Welfare Grants Advisory Committee is giving special consideration to applications for grants from groups and organisations associated with the disabled and their needs.

The Budget has not yet been passed and we have not allocated any funds in respect of the Community Welfare Grants Fund, but I have invited the Association for the Developmentally Disabled to apply to us because it will be a new applicant. There is a programme to raise the awareness of the department's staff towards the needs of the disabled and ways in which the department can improve its service towards the disabled, including access to facilities and services.

Each service location (there are 50 approximately) will be developing a number of individual programmes which relate to the particular needs of disabled people within the local community. Many of these programmes will be in co-operation with other organisations and local authorities and with the participation of the disabled themselves. An overall emphasis on providing support services for the disabled and their families (particularly in the case of children who are disabled) will enable the disabled and their families to have greater access to community activities and services.

This programme should enable the department to make a unique contribution towards making the year a success because of the wide range of services the department already provides which relate directly to the disabled, the awareness of the department's staff of many of the problems of the disabled and the close contact many of the staff have with the local community.

**Mr. OSWALD:** There are a large number of aged people in the community who are socially isolated. Are any grants to be made available to help those socially isolated, aged people in the community who are not receiving any help at the moment?

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** That help would have to be provided through the grants fund. I have said that, in conjunction with the Federal Minister for Social Security, we are considering a programme for aged people, particularly with a view to maintaining them in their own homes. The allocation for community welfare grants funds is \$980 000. That is a big increase of nearly \$250 000. None of that has been allocated, because the Budget has not been passed. We set a closing date for applications, which has passed, but we will not necessarily reject any other applications made on that account. We set a closing date so that, as far as possible, we would receive applications for on-going funding so that they could be dealt with together and so that we could carve up the cake. Certainly, there will be most sympathetic consideration of projects to assist the aged, especially the isolated aged.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I draw to the attention of the Committee the time and the agreement made.

**Mr. OSWALD:** I am trying to make my questions brief. I refer now to the large number of unemployed youths we see standing around in the evenings in shopping centres in the metropolitan area and the city. The department is doing much work in the area of social workers who move amongst those people. Has the Government and the department a plan, or can grants be made available, to supply more field officers who can move out and come into contact with these groups of young people?

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** We are most concerned about young people who seem to have nothing else to do but stand around. We are sympathetic towards them. About

three months ago we appointed a neighbourhood youth worker who operates in Hindley Street, particularly in the two pinball parlours, Tilt and Downtown. I have made a point of meeting that person to find out how his work is going. I am pleased at the way that work is progressing. As the honourable member has suggested, it is necessary to keep in touch with other agencies that can help in this regard.

A committee has been set up between the Government, the City Council and other interested people to try to do something about the unemployed youths who congregate in these areas. There has been an organisation called Youth Link with which we have been able to consult and which is going to help us in this matter. Quite recently we have been told we are going to be able to get an office area or centre in Hindley Street without paying for it. We hope that these bodies can be brought together there to assist these young people. We recognise also that out of the city, including the north-eastern suburbs, this problem exists. This can be done not only by payments through the department and by persons employed in the department but also through grants, particularly concerning the north-eastern suburbs where I recognise there has been a need for a neighbourhood youth worker for some time for whom we have not been able to provide.

In the first place, we are considering providing one and we are doing our best and looking towards that. Also, a locally based organisation has made application for grants funds, and this will be considered by the Community Welfare Grants Advisory Committee. So, in both of the areas that the member raises there is something which can be done. First, as far as possible within budgetary constraints, the department will provide neighbourhood youth workers and other support. Secondly, it will co-operate with other organisations. Finally, it will consider grants to organisations out of the grants fund.

**Mr. OSWALD:** The Government has acknowledged a need to expand the self-help and mutual assistance programme that has been developed over recent years. There are obviously other areas in this grants for welfare activities where the Government is planning to make grants available outside the areas I have canvassed. Can the Minister mention some of the other areas where grants are going to be made available?

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** I think much of the reason for the large increase in the grants fund has been that the Government recognises the need to encourage mutual self-help. I think that, with regard to any general policy, that is the main thing we can say. The guidelines which at present operate for the Community Welfare Grants Advisory Committee are available at any departmental office. I cannot say anything more on a policy basis about the way in which the grants fund will be used in every case. I am sure that this was the case with the previous Government. In every case of an application, I receive advice from that committee as to what I will do, so it is a matter for its detailed consideration on an *ad hoc* basis in each case, having regard to the guidelines. The recommendations which are committed to me are most detailed. The present Chairman is very efficient indeed in sending out recommendations and details. I have not rejected any recommendation which has been made to me by that committee.

On a few occasions I have asked it to reconsider its decision. However, always, in the final result, I have accepted the recommendation of the committee, so I cannot say that there is any policy area of the Government, apart from a desire to assist and encourage it.

**Dr. BILLARD:** I am delighted that there is an increase

of more than 40 per cent in community welfare grants. What checks are made of outside organisations that receive grants to determine their *bona fides*, and are any checks made, following the grants, to assist the effectiveness of the programme that was started?

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** Checks are made, and I am most impressed by the effectiveness and thoroughness of them. It is a committee of moderate size, with eight members. It has access to a number of officers in the department, part of whose duty is to assist the committee in making these checks. When a new application is made by an organisation for funding, depending on the size of the application, at least one officer goes to the venue that the organisation is operating from, speaks to the people, looks at books, and so on, and makes an assessment.

Where it is considered relatively important that a check should be made, sometimes one or two members of the committee (people outside the department who are appointed by the Minister) go and make the assessment. The officers of the department who assist the committee keep a constant check and make assessments regard on-going funding.

The on-going funding could apply each year, because most organisations are not making a "one off" claim but have on-going functions. Part of the assessment for a claim relates to how effective the organisation has been in using the funding received in the previous year. I am most impressed with the checks that are made. People cannot be there for the 24 hours of the day. I think that every check that can be expected to be made is made to ensure that the funds are used for the purpose for which they have been granted and are used effectively.

**Dr. BILLARD:** Do they use internal social indicators in the department as an indicator of need, or do they use the same things as are used outside?

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** Social indicators are used.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Are there any further questions? There being no further questions, I declare the examination of the vote completed.

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Public and Consumer Affairs, \$7 399 000

**Chairman:**

Mr. E. K. Russack

**Members:**

Mr. J. C. Bannon  
 Dr. B. Billard  
 Mr. G. J. Crafter  
 The Hon. Peter Duncan  
 Mr. R. E. Glazbrook  
 Mr. J. Mathwin  
 Mr. J. K. G. Oswald  
 Mr. J. P. Trainer

**Witness:**

The Hon. J. C. Burdett, Minister of Community Welfare and Minister of Consumer Affairs.

**Departmental Advisers:**

Mr. M. A. Noblet, Director-General and Commissioner for Consumer Affairs, Department of Public and Consumer Affairs.

Mr. P. F. Young, Deputy Director-General and Superintendent of Licensed Premises, Department of Public and Consumer Affairs.

Mr. D. V. Walker, Chief Management Services Officer, Department of Public and Consumer Affairs.

Mr. W. A. Pryor, Senior Management Services Officer, Department of Public and Consumer Affairs.

Mr. D. Selth, Prices Commissioner, Department of Public and Consumer Affairs.

Mr. P. Kay, Executive Officer, Department of Public and Consumer Affairs.

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** Could I ask for about 10 minutes to rearrange my papers?

**The CHAIRMAN:** There is a change of Committee. However, it is up to the Committee.

**The Hon. PETER DUNCAN:** Has that been agreed to?

**The CHAIRMAN:** No. A new Committee has been formed. The Minister has asked for a few minutes to rearrange papers, etc. It is up to the Committee to decide whether that is approved.

**The Hon. PETER DUNCAN:** A couple of moments for the papers to be rearranged would be sufficient but, given the time and the limit on the debate, I think 10 minutes is more than would be needed to rearrange papers and change over. I think two or three minutes may be acceptable but any longer would be unreasonable.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The Minister is being asked to be as quick as he possibly can.

**Mr. OSWALD:** Other Ministers have changed in about five minutes, and I think that is a reasonable time.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I declare the proposed expenditure open for examination.

**The Hon. PETER DUNCAN:** I notice from the objectives of the department that the fifth objective is to promote equal opportunity in the community, regardless of sex or marital status. I have had the opportunity of reviewing the Public Service list, admittedly the 1978 copy, and I do not believe that the situation has changed very much since then. In that copy of the list there are no senior persons in the department who are female with the exception of the Commissioner for Equal Opportunity herself. Since these Estimates Committees have been sitting, not one of the officers who have been advising Ministers has been female. As this is the department involved and the Minister has responsibility under that objective to promote equal opportunity in the community, regardless of sex, I believe the Minister should tell the Committee what proposals he has to dramatically increase the number of females working in the upper echelons of the Public Service, both in the department and throughout the Government at large.

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** It is true that there are not many women in the upper echelons of the Public Service at the present time, nor were there in the time of the previous Government. After the Sex Discrimination Act was introduced, nothing was done by the previous Government effectively to increase the number of the fairer sex employed in the Public Service. So, it is not peculiar to this Government. The honourable member is getting carried away if he claims that it is.

It was a problem in the previous Government, and it is a problem with this Government. It is a problem for this reason. I believe that the community has educated itself and has changed its attitude fairly effectively in recent times on the matter of sex discrimination. Whereas 20 years ago an entirely different attitude was taken by employers, including the Public Service, towards women, that has now changed and it is going on changing. I will agree that the discrimination itself has not ceased, but more particularly, the effects of discrimination have not ceased, and that is where the problem lies. The problem is in education and in educating women for the positions and giving them the experience. The reason that not many women are found in the upper echelons is that most of the

men in the upper echelons have received a lengthy education and a large amount of experience. It takes time to rectify that.

The way in which one sets out to do that is to provide opportunities for women. I favour doing that as much as is possible in both my departments and in making sure that women have the opportunity to study, the opportunity to get qualifications and the opportunity for experience. These things are going to take time, and it is obvious that the previous Government was not able to solve this problem, either, because it did not do anything about changing the balance. The member for Elizabeth asked what I proposed to do as the Minister responsible for the administration of the Sex Discrimination Act in so far as it relates to the Commissioner for Equal Opportunity. Of course, the honourable member will know that I am responsible for that Act only in that regard. It is committed to the Premier. I am responsible for the administration of that Act in so far as it applies to the Commissioner for Equal Opportunity, and the Attorney-General is responsible in so far as it applies in regard to the Sex Discrimination Board.

The answer to the question is simple, of course. It was an Act introduced by the previous Government and passed with the approval and support of the Party which is now the Government Party. It provides a system whereby, if a complaint is made to the Commissioner, the Commissioner seeks not to really arbitrate but set up a procedure of conciliation of the complaint. Unless a complaint is made, there is no way in which she can act. In my position as the Minister responsible for the Commissioner for Equal Opportunity, I would say that that position will continue.

The Attorney-General is reviewing the Act and I will take part in that review. A conference of Commissioners for Equal Opportunity throughout Australia is to take place next week in South Australia and that conference will consider how the structure of the Act can be improved and how the administration also can be improved.

**The Hon. PETER DUNCAN:** I appreciate the Minister's comment and his expression of concern about these matters. I would like to know how long he believes it might take before women will be involved in the upper echelons of the Public Service to a much greater extent and when it will be necessary, in the Minister's view, to take more direct action to right the balance in women's favour—five years, 10 years, for example.

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** I am not prepared to express an opinion as to the number of years. As with all matters of discrimination, whether it is sex discrimination, race discrimination or discrimination against handicapped or disabled persons, it is a matter of time. It would take a braver man than I to state the number of years it will take, and I am not prepared to do that, as I think it would be a wrong step. Women, including women's advisers whom I have consulted about this, have agreed that it would be wrong to state arbitrarily and directly (and the honourable member is talking about direct action) that there will be the same number of men and women at a certain level and at a certain time. This has been undertaken to a certain extent in the Federal field and has not worked. I do not want to appear to be negative, but I must maintain that what is necessary in this field is the continued promotion of opportunities for women and the continued promotion for them of opportunities for education and experience and taking direct action against any real form of discrimination.

I make that point most strongly. I am not prepared either to name the time or to say that it should be specified that, at a certain level of the Public Service, there shall be

a certain number of women and a certain number of men.

**The Hon. PETER DUNCAN:** If that is the Minister's attitude, does he then not agree, for example, with the Victorian Liberal Party's rules, which specify that half of the executive officers and half of the executive of the Party must be female? That rule seems to have worked since 1949, as I understand, with very considerable benefit to the Liberal Party in Victoria, and I see no reason why that principle cannot work within the public area as well as it appears to work in the Liberal Party in Victoria.

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** I can see every reason why it would not work as well. There are rules in the South Australian Liberal Party about the number of women and the number of men. In a voluntary organisation, be it a political organisation or any other, in which the term of office is usually one year, two years, or something like that, where it is not a question of education or expertise, where the organisation is democratic, as the Liberal Party is, and if that organisation works on the basis of representation, whether it is a vote or an election, there is some basis for saying that women should be represented in some capacity. Opposition members are starting to put this in terms of electoral matters and representation to Parliament, but that is another matter.

The reason why the Liberal Party in Victoria created this rule (and the South Australian Liberal Party has some rules in regard to office bearers) was because it is a matter of representation. Roughly, half of our members are women and, because there has been some difficulty in having them represented in the past, the rule was applied. However, when considering professional people who work in the Public Service or in industry, all of the people to whom I have spoken about this matter, including women and including my own women's advisers, have said that quality must be looked for—the person best equipped for the job should be given the job. We must ensure that women have the same opportunities as men and we must also ensure that the person best equipped for the job is chosen, but the Public Service is not representational and it should never be representational.

One should never say that there should be a certain proportion of women, ethnic people or people of different races. We should look for the best quality in regard to public servants. I strongly support the view that we should try to take every possible step to see that all of the members of those groups I mentioned which, in one degree or another have been somewhat disadvantaged in regard to employment opportunities, have an opportunity to get jobs.

**The Hon. PETER DUNCAN:** The Minister was quick to jump to questions of capacity, ability and training, on the assumption, as he put to the Committee, that no two people are equal in such matters.

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** I did not say that.

**The Hon. PETER DUNCAN:** You did not say that, but that was the implication. I put to the Minister that this State's Public Service Act has provided for situations in which persons applying for positions are equal in ability, etc., but where one person has war service, that person gets the nod for the position. Does the Minister believe that, some time in the future, if not in the present, it may be necessary to introduce that sort of rule on a temporary basis to ensure that positions in the higher echelons of the Public Service are open to women, because I do not believe that, if we wait 50 years, given the attitudes that exist in many levels at present, women will be able to obtain equality of opportunity with the current rules that apply?

There will need to be a period of active discrimination, if you like, in favour of women to ensure that they have

equality of opportunity to reach the upper echelons of public administration of this State. Given that there has already been a precedent for this sort of favourable discrimination in the past, does the Minister see the possibility of this sort of thing in the future if his hopes are not met in the reasonably foreseeable future?

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** I am not out of sympathy with the honourable member's sentiments. I point out, first, that this is not my Act, as I said before, and I say again that it seems that the attitudes in regard to the employment of women are changing fairly rapidly. The degree of equal opportunity for women that has been achieved in the past 10 years has been great indeed, and is amazing if one thinks about the ways in which community and employer attitudes have changed. There has been an astonishing advance, which, to some extent, has been slowed down by the extremists in this field, the few people in the women's movements who have gone overboard in the eyes of the community. That has not helped at all: it has had the reverse effect. The honourable member asked whether I thought—I repeat that it is not my Act. I do not believe it will be necessary to provide direct discrimination; as I said, I am in sympathy with the honourable member's sentiments and I would not rule out the possibility of considering whether that may be necessary at some time.

**The Hon. PETER DUNCAN:** I wish to refer to another subject.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I must give the call to the other side.

**Mr. OSWALD:** What is the reason for the substantial increase for the Residential Tenancies Tribunal clerical staff? Has there been any change in Government policy since the last Budget?

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** A Cabinet working party appointed last year has now made recommendations for reorganisation. The proposed allocation for salaries takes account of the working party's recommendations. Extra assistance, including some overtime, included in last year's actual sum has not been provided for in the current year because it is not expected to recur, provided Treasury adequately funds costs of computerisation and the lodgment and refund systems. Another line refers to residential tenancies.

The Estimates include provision for the six residential tenancies investigation officers who were previously debited to the Department of Consumer Affairs, involving a sum of \$80 000. It is very important that there has been a reallocation. Some of the investigation officers whose salaries were previously debited to the Division of Consumer Affairs have now been allocated to residential tenancies, and that is the reason for the change. There are four additional officers. Also in regard to residential tenancies, the Act is to be extended to include the whole State, which did not apply previously. Obviously, greater funding is provided and, because this comes within the area of Mr. Young, I ask him to give further details.

**Mr. Young:** There is little I can usefully add to what the Minister has said, but I indicate that, in addition to the transfer of the six residential tenancies investigation officers to the residential tenancies branch, it has been necessary to provide an additional sum of \$70 000.

This is included in the sum of \$288 235, and is to provide for four additional officers to cope more effectively and efficiently with the work of the Residential Tenancies Branch. There is also within the \$70 000 a component to cover the full-time full-year cost of officers who have been employed for only part of the last financial year.

**Mr. BANNON:** Who holds the position of Commissioner for Consumer Affairs?

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** The Director-General, Mr. Noblet.

**Mr. BANNON:** Is that a formal position in addition to his Director-Generalship?

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** Yes. It is a statutory position which is required to be filled under the Prices Act. It was formerly held by Mr. Lance Baker, who retired in March. It was not felt necessary to replace the position. It seemed to us that, from an administrative point of view, the Director-General could perfectly well carry out this function. So, that position has not been replaced on the basis of a separate officer being required, and the Director-General now holds that statutory post.

**Mr. BANNON:** So, for a period before his retirement, Mr. Baker's position was redundant?

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** I suppose these things always occur gradually. I am not saying that Mr. Baker was redundant. However, one can do these things only when there is a change of staff and, with the restructuring of the department that has occurred, there did not seem to be any point in having a separate position.

**Mr. BANNON:** Does this—

**The ACTING CHAIRMAN (Mr. Mathwin):** Order! It has been the procedure in this Committee, because of the acoustic problems (particularly in relation to *Hansard* and people in the gallery) for Committee members to stand when they have the call. This is very helpful to *Hansard*, and particularly to the people in the gallery.

**Mr. BANNON:** I am happy to oblige, although the practice in Committee A is for members to sit, just as the Minister remains seated.

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** This has been the practice in this Committee.

**The ACTING CHAIRMAN:** Some Ministers have stood up.

**Mr. BANNON:** It is a waste of time, but I will do it. Perhaps I will remain standing during the course of my questions. If members can recall the answer that the Minister gave, I ask now whether that situation relates to the general abandonment by the Government of price control.

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** No, it does not, because that was, and still is, in the hands of the Prices Commissioner; that is totally unrelated. If there was any suggestion in the Leader's question (and I apologise to the Leader if there was not) that the fact that a separate Commissioner for Consumer Affairs has not been appointed indicates a downgrading of the department's position in the eyes of the Government, it would be quite false.

If members look at the whole Budget, they will find that there have been increases therein for this department. There is no suggestion in this Budget that there is any downgrading of this department; rearrangements and rationalisations have occurred. We are looking at the area of the Commercial Division in regard to a rationalisation. Previously, the Registrar of the Credit Tribunal was required to be a Special Magistrate; this stemmed from the Consumer Transactions Act and the Consumer Credit Act of 1973. At that time, the Government expected that the person involved would have to perform more work of a quasi judicial nature than he has in fact had to do. We have therefore changed that position to one of Commercial Registrar, who must simply be a legal practitioner and not a Special Magistrate. There has been a general rationalisation of the position.

The figures in the Budget justify the statement that this is a strong Budget for this department, and that there is no intention whatsoever of downgrading the department's activities, except, of course, in the area of prices, where the Government has taken a different stance, which has been well advertised and which I will not waste the

Committee's time repeating now. There has been a reduction of staff in that area.

**Mr. BANNON:** In view of that, will the Minister provide the Committee with an assessment of the success or otherwise of the Government's prices policy? What has been the comparative movement of those prices that have been decontrolled or are no longer controlled in the same way as a result of this change by the Government? Has it meant that the rate of increase of prices has been slow or, indeed, the opposite, as a result of the Government's action?

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** I have been most concerned about this matter because, as I said when the change was made, there would be a change to a system of monitoring, to a system of trying to evaluate what the changes were, instead of fixing the prices. The main reason for this was the delays that were occurring through the system of formal price control. We could get delays, particularly over the Christmas period and times like that, of five or six weeks, and, at a time of rapidly escalating costs, this was most deleterious to private industry.

The Government changed to a system of some form of price control, some justification and some monitoring in order to avoid delays. We decided to retain carefully (and I said so at the time) the monitoring role, and we have been doing just that. I have from time to time asked for reports from the Prices Commissioner in this area, and he has said that so far a fairly short time has been involved, this system having operated only since early this year. The Commissioner has said that, in regard to most products, it has been difficult to assess what the effect has been, as the effect has been different in different areas and in regard to different products, and in some areas we get distortions.

I think that the time is too short to assess what the overall situation has been. Certainly, in percentage terms, I am now not able, and will not be in a position to do so within a short time, to give an overall report on the effect on prices in South Australia following the changes in price control procedures.

**The Hon. PETER DUNCAN:** Can I follow up that point?

**The ACTING CHAIRMAN (Mr. Mathwin):** No. Usually, about six questions have been allowed on a certain point.

**Mr. BANNON:** The Minister has indicated that he is not able to provide the Committee with details of price movements on those articles that have been affected as a result of the change in Government policy. I suggest that, the sooner those details are made available and published, the better it will be. Will the Minister advise the Committee on the movement that has taken place in quarrying prices since this change has occurred, and say whether that movement is commensurate with an assessment that the Government's policy has been successful?

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** The quarrying position has been the most worrying—

**The Hon. PETER DUNCAN:** Politically!

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** No, not politically. The politics of prices does not concern me—I am concerned more about the fairness of prices to producers and consumers. Even in the field of quarrying I hope that members will note the fact that we are still below interstate prices.

**Mr. BANNON:** We need to be—that is one of the cost advantages that we have to hang onto.

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** I am coming to that. I ask the Committee to note that we are still below interstate quarrying prices. I have been concerned about the last increase, because it indicates that increases have been based not only on costs but also on increased profit margins. A letter has been sent to the industry concerned,

saying that this will not be tolerated in regard to future increases. It indicates that we are here to monitor the justification of increases on the basis of cost. We will not accept an increase as a result of upgraded margins. The Prices Commissioner is present and I will ask him to add to what I have said about quarry products and products across the board. It is not yet possible to monitor what change, if any, there has been in regard to increases because of the change in policy and because there have been so many products, so many variables, and questions about whether the last price increase was long delayed or kept up to date and so on. The member has asked whether we can quickly supply some sort of evaluation. I think that we would not in the near future be able to supply that because there has not been an across the board indication that prices have risen radically. I will ask Mr. Selth to comment on the two matters: first, in relation to quarry products and, secondly, about the ability of assessing price increases across the board.

**Mr. Selth:** In regard to quarry price increases and their justification, we have examined the information supplied. The position is not greatly different from the period when prices were under control. Costs generally are supported and are being examined by officers. I do not have the amounts of the increase we me, but I did bring information about the current price of 20 mm screenings. Historically, we have had an advantage, and this still prevails because at September 1980 the price in Adelaide was \$5.70, in Melbourne \$9.15 and in Sydney \$10.06. The situation is much as it was: Adelaide still has a great advantage. It is likely that the cartage is also likely to be lower here because of the shorter hauls.

In regard to general price control, the comparison is hard to assess at this stage because we have monitored items that have been released from formal control and, in general, industries that have been released have, to some degree, shown modest increases (which is probably the best way to put it). The increases do not look to be greater than they would have been under a controlled situation. From personal observation I have noticed that our pasty prices are 39c (one or two outlets may charge a little more) yet in Melbourne a similar item costs 52c. It appears to have been fairly restrained at this stage. We are not able to put a rubber stamp on it and say that it is of that order, but over a period it may show one way or another.

**Mr. OSWALD:** I refer to "Contingencies". Can the Minister explain the obviously significant increase in "Administrative expenses, minor equipment and sundries" because the actual payment last year was \$119 525 and \$177 000 is now proposed?

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** The Director-General has information, and I will ask him to give the details.

**Mr. Noblet:** The sum of \$119 525 was actually paid in 1979-80 and can be broken down. About \$50 000 was allocated for management services; \$52 000 for education; about \$18 000 for policy research; and the breakdown of the \$177 000 proposed for this year includes \$52 000 for management services, an increase of \$3 000; \$80 000 for education, which is a substantial increase, and \$45 000 for policy research. The increase in management services expenditure is not great. The increase from \$52 000 to \$80 000 for education is partly due to printing costs carried over from last year as a \$10 000 account was not rendered by the end of the year. The balance of that difference relates to an increased emphasis on consumer education. In regard to policy research, the increase is from \$18 000 to \$45 000, and the increase is made up of \$2 000 from accounts carried over from the previous year, \$6 000 in additional library expenses, and the balance is for additional research projects, particularly in relation to

product safety and accident surveillance systems.

**The Hon. PETER DUNCAN:** Can the Minister say what provisions the Government is making, if any, for the proclamation of the debts repayment scheme legislation and associated Bills? There is nothing in the Budget or the Budget papers indicating that anything is happening at the Government level to give effect to Parliament's wishes in this matter. What is the Minister doing about this?

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** The Government has decided not to proclaim the Act at this time. Of course, the previous Government was in that situation for a long time; indeed, there was quite a period after the Act had been passed when it made no steps to proclaim it.

This Government does not propose to proclaim the legislation at the present time. The reasons are, particularly, the changes which have been made federally with regard to the Bankruptcy Act which, broadly speaking, provide for small bankruptcies, the same kind of thing, although not as extensive. One quite important thing in this area is that it was always feared that, if the legislation was proclaimed, there would be constitutional challenges on the grounds that the legislation impinged into the Federal power with regard to bankruptcy. I sat on the Select Committee on the Bill, as the honourable member knows. That threat was made quite clearly from certain quarters at that time and was made to me both before and after we came into Government.

I am not worried about threats, but since the Australian Law Reform Commission made its report, and since the Federal bankruptcy legislation has been changed, it has made that threat very much more dangerous than it was before, because previously there was not this kind of mini-bankruptcy which, quite frankly, was what the Debts Repayment Act set up. That was not provided for federally, but now it has gone very much closer to that and the chances of a successful appeal are much greater. That is not really the main reason. The main reason is that, because we have new Federal legislation recently enacted which comes into this field, we ought to see what that does and how it operates before we proclaim this Act, which the previous Government, after all, was in no great hurry to proclaim. For that reason, the Government has decided not to proclaim the Act at present. It has also decided not to repeal it and to leave it on the Statute Book so that the opportunity is clearly there to proclaim it if it does appear to be appropriate at some time.

As I said, I sat on the Select Committee and spoke in debate on the Bill. There are, in my view, merits in the Bill; there is no question of doubt about that. The question is whether the costs which would be imposed on the Government are justified, particularly in the present situation where you have a new Federal Bankruptcy Act, or new amendments to it, which provide for smaller bankruptcies than previously, and whether the imposition which industry at least feels it will experience is justified in that situation. I made recommendations to the Government as to what should be done in this field. I did not find that an easy task. I feel that there is some merit in the Act, and I said so at the time. On the other hand, at the present time of budgetary restraint, and at a time when we have a new Federal Act which at least partly goes into this area, it is not the time to proclaim the Act, and the Government has decided not to proclaim it at this stage.

**The Hon. PETER DUNCAN:** I am amazed to hear what the Minister has had to say about this matter: first, because of the fact that I see it as a direct challenge to the rights of this Parliament by this Government. The Parliament having passed this piece of legislation, I would have thought that inevitably it was the proper thing for the Government to do to set up the necessary administration

to bring the legislation into effect. Aside from that, I am amazed to hear the Minister trying to defend his actions by suggesting that in some way the actions of the former Government were of a similar type. The delay that occurred in implementing this legislation when we were in power was specifically related to the need to set up and structure the necessary administrative committees and staff, etc., to ensure that it could be properly implemented.

There was also the question of drawing up the regulations and making the necessary arrangements between the particular departments for use of various community welfare regional offices and the like. I might say, on that score, that if ever there was a person in a position to have been able to achieve that with relative ease it is the present Minister, given that he is the Minister of the two departments that were to be concerned in this matter. I totally reject his suggestion that there was some sort of delay or indecision on the part of the previous Government in relation to this matter. He knows that that is not true and the implication is quite unworthy. Apart from that, I am amazed to find that the Minister is refusing to implement this legislation, given that the Parliament has approved it, and given that the Governor has assented to it. I think that that is an interesting precedent and one I find quite extraordinary.

If the Government was to carry on like this it would, in effect, muzzle and thwart the whole intent of Parliament. The Minister can smirk if he likes, but that, quite clearly, is the implication of what he has done in this matter. Aside from that, he has said that he fears for the constitutional validity of the legislation. Well, of course, if that is the case, let him produce the Solicitor-General's or some other person's opinion to back up his view on that matter. I would be interested to know whether the Solicitor-General has indicated an opinion on that matter, and I ask the Minister that.

Secondly, I am amazed to hear him suggest, given the current economic climate which we have had foisted upon us by the Fraser Government's policies, that this is not the time for this particular legislation. If ever there was a time that the people of this State needed the protection in this legislation (and when I say the people of this State, I refer also to the business community because, if the Minister takes advice from the Director-General he will find that the Canadian experience is that the business community has positively benefited from this legislation) it is now. To suggest that the time might not be opportune at present is ridiculous. There are many thousands of people in South Australia who should be obtaining the benefit of this legislation, and I think it is deplorable that they are being denied that by this Minister and this Government.

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** The suggestion that the action of the Government in not yet proclaiming the legislation, which the previous Government did not proclaim either, is in contempt of Parliament is quite remarkable. The honourable member suggests some sort of precedent. I will give him a precedent. Part IIC of the Builders Licensing Act was enacted in 1974. That set up a Builders Indemnity Fund, and that has never been put into operation; it has never been proclaimed. So to suggest that there is any kind of contempt of Parliament or that we are establishing a precedent whereby what Parliament passes is not put into operation is ridiculous, because that has happened before for no good reason. In this case there has been a good reason, which I have given.

That is that, since the Act was passed, the Federal Government has amended the Federal Bankruptcy Act. I have said this previously. It has made substantial alterations to the position of small bankruptcies, and this

Government wants to see how that operates before it puts into operation this new piece of State legislation, which is subject to some constitutional challenge.

**Mr. OSWALD:** I ask the Minister for details of the plant and equipment to be purchased for the Consumer Affairs Division, the provision for this line having increased from \$54 809 actually spent to \$85 000 proposed. I would be interested to know what equipment is involved and the branch for which it is intended.

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** The present condition of existing equipment being replaced has been under consideration for some time. All of this equipment is for the Standards Branch. There is a hoist at a cost of \$23 000. The present hoist is approximately 15 years old.

**Mr. BANNON:** The Minister is trying to raise the standard.

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** It depends on which standard the Leader means. I wish he would try to raise the standard. The hoist is continually breaking down. Next time it breaks down it will have to stay out of action, as parts are no longer available. Further, there is a safety problem. A hoist, with a mass of half a tonne on the hook, is very dangerous when it breaks down. I may mention that I had notes prepared on this and it amuses me to read that the half tonne mass has a tendency to fall "to the extreme distress of anyone or anything under it". I expect that it would cause distress. If it fell on a person's head, that would be the end of him.

There is provision for l.p.g. equipment at \$15 000. We have not any existing equipment, and that matter needs to be measured and tested because of the tendency now for motor vehicles to use l.p.g. Automatic pipettes are provided for at \$9 000. The document states, "If the Government is earnest in its concern that we operate as economically as possible, it will provide the money." The officers asked for the equipment so that the department can operate as economically as possible.

All this equipment is in the Standards Branch. There is also provision for 5 000-litre stainless steel proving measures at \$20 000, one master metre and allied equipment at \$6 000, and 10 half-tonne cast iron roller masses at \$12 000.

The equipment is expensive. Much of the present equipment was outdated. I looked at it soon after we came to office, and I considered that the request made by the officers for improved plant was justified.

**Mr. CRAFTER:** I refer to page 550 of the programme papers, and I understand that the description under the heading "Commercial Licensing and Regulation" is not accurate. Has the Minister issued directions, or have his officers issued directions, changing the functions of one or all of those matters?

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** There have been changes, and I think Mr. Noblet could explain them.

**Mr. Noblet:** I am not clear on what changes the member is talking about.

**Mr. CRAFTER:** Any changes that have been made to the functions of the section.

**Mr. Noblet:** The only change that comes to mind is that the function of investigating complaints about building work, formerly carried out partly by investigators of the Builders Licensing Board and partly by the Consumer Services Branch, has been transferred to the Consumer Services Branch. The Builders Licensing Board will retain only two inspectors for assessing the suitability of applicants for licences.

There always has been duplication in those two areas, and, in some cases, where the Builders Licensing Board has completed investigations under its jurisdiction, it has been necessary for it to go to the Consumer Services

Branch on matters that do not come under the board's jurisdiction. To meet public requirements and to pool all the resources available, inspectors have been transferred to the Consumer Services Branch so that all of them function in one area.

**Mr. CRAFTER:** About how long is it since that alteration took place?

**Mr. Noblet:** Inspectors were transferred with effect from, I think, early to mid-August this year.

**Mr. CRAFTER:** Can the Minister perhaps provide an answer in writing on this matter? I understand that the Builders Licensing Board has not received any complaints about faulty building work in the past 50 days or so, and I think the best way to resolve the matter is for the Minister to provide information on complaints that the board has received about faulty workmanship since this change has taken place.

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** We will provide the information, with the necessary explanation. The Builders Licensing Board would have been unlikely to receive any complaints during the past 50 days because, since the change in August, the complaints always have come to the Consumer Services Branch in the first place. If the member would like a reply in writing, we will provide that.

**Mr. CRAFTER:** I am sure the Minister is not saying that the delay will now be several months in having action taken on a building complaint.

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** No.

**Mr. CRAFTER:** Have the functions or duties of these officers been altered now that they have been transferred to another department?

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** I think Mr. Noblet can answer but the basic answer is "No". The reason for the change is to give better service to the consumer. When the officers were with the Builders Licensing Board the only power they had was to take the matter up with the board, whereas now the inspectors can carry out the inspection procedures and discuss the matter with both parties, which has always been carried out by the branch, and the sole purpose of the change was to provide better service to the consumer, which we are confident there will be.

**Mr. Noblet:** The functions of the inspectors who have been transferred to the Consumer Services Branch are broadly similar in practice, but their job specification has been changed so that the two inspectors who have remained with the Builders Licensing Board have a job specification that reflects their duty to assist the board. Those transferred to the branch now have the same job specification as other officers who investigate other types of complaint and are responsible to a Senior Investigation Officer rather than to the Builders Licensing Board.

**Mr. CRAFTER:** I understood that the former Builders Licensing Board officers transferred to the new branch now investigate only general consumer complaints. If that is so, what qualifications have those inspectors to undertake that function?

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** I will ask Mr. Noblet to answer that question.

**Mr. Noblet:** The inspectors still only handle complaints about building work. They are located in a section of the Consumer Services Branch which deals only with building complaints. The section is known as B section, only for the reason that the sections are alphabetically designated. The only change in the functions that they now carry out on consumer complaints other than those formerly carried out is that, whereas before they were restricted by the terms of reference of the Builders Licensing Board itself to investigate complaints about faulty workmanship as such, they may now carry out investigations, as do other investigation officers in B section of the Consumer

Services Branch, into other aspects of building complaints such as allegations of excessive prices or unreasonable enforcement of contractual terms, and matters of that kind.

Only by doing this can we ensure that all matters arising in a dispute between a builder and a consumer are sorted out at the same time rather than sorting out matters in one area and others having to be sorted out in a different area.

**Mr. CRAFTER:** Can the Minister explain what is the new authority for this additional function of the Builders Licensing Inspectors? Is it that they are now operating under the Prices Act, the Builders Licensing Act, or both? Has any public announcement been made in the building industry of the fact that these inspectors are operating under a different authority?

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** They are operating under the Prices Act. I will ask Mr. Noblet to state whether the industry is aware of that fact or not. I would like to repeat that this step has been taken solely for the purpose of protecting the consumer and giving a greater and better protection to the consumer with wider powers and functions, including conciliation, and so on. It has been taken for no other reason. As the Director-General just indicated, the powers of the inspector are wider under the Prices Act. He is not confined to just inspecting faulty workmanship: he can deal with the whole problem, which very often does go back to the contract in question. In other words, he can cover the whole transaction.

Certainly, I appreciate the honourable member's question. If he thinks that this is a worse deal for the consumer, I can assure him that we disagree with him. It was done because we thought that it was a better deal for the consumer and could be effected more quickly and at an earlier stage, as the inspector has a wider function to cover. As to notification within the industry, I will ask the Director-General to comment.

**Mr. Noblet:** At the time this change took place, advertisements were placed in the daily press indicating that in future all building complaints should be addressed to the Consumer Services Branch rather than the Builders Licensing Board. The Master Builders Association and the Housing Industry Association were also advised and the change was publicised through their respective trade journals. Whether they are aware of the technicality that officers are now operating under the Prices Act rather than the Builders Licensing Act, I do not know. I rather doubt that they would be aware of that, but the industry associations are certainly aware of the changes made and of the reasons for them.

**The CHAIRMAN:** It has been usual to allow a member to pursue a question, and it has also been usual in some cases to allow up to six questions. An honourable member has now asked six questions on this subject, and it is only fair that another member should have an opportunity. The honourable member for Elizabeth.

**The Hon. PETER DUNCAN:** Has the Minister given any instructions to the Public Trustee as to changing the general policy objectives under which the Public Trustee operated during the last Government?

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** The answer is "No".

**The Hon. PETER DUNCAN:** How many wills have been made by the Public Trustee in the six months to 30 June this year and in the equivalent six-month period in 1979?

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** The Deputy Director-General may have that information. I will ask him for the figures in a moment and if not available they can be obtained. There have been a number of reasons why, across the board and not only with the Public Trustee, fewer wills have been made recently. I do know that the percentage of applications for probate lodged by the Public Trustee has

been maintained: it is the same percentage as previously, that is, 32 per cent of the total applications for probate. There have been reasons why fewer wills have been made, and this will probably be reflected more in the future. One reason has been the abolition of succession duties, with more people tending to rely on joint tenancies and things of that kind without making wills; therefore fewer wills have been made.

Because of the abolition of succession duties, banks, building societies, and so on, have relaxed their rules about the amounts of money that they will release without formal grant of probate. Without a succession duties certificate, that is difficult, and that was the problem before. People had to have a succession duties certificate, which is no longer applicable. There appear to be with the Public Trustee, executor companies and solicitors fewer wills than were made before. Perhaps another reason is that the pushing of do-it-yourself kits seems to be going on at present. If Mr. Young has anything to add to that or has any figures, I would ask him to comment.

**Mr. Young:** I can provide figures on an annual basis. For the year ended 30 June 1980, the Public Trustee prepared 7 906 wills for persons who did not previously have wills lodged with the Public Trustee. That is an increase over the figure for the year ended 30 June 1979 which was 7 345. For persons in changed circumstances who changed their wills during each of those years, the figure was, for the year ended 30 June 1979, 2 842.

This increased to 3 437 for the year ended 30 June 1980. There is a third category of wills prepared by the Public Trustee, when someone other than the Public Trustee is appointed as executor. Again, for the year ended 30 June 1979, 53 such wills were prepared, and for the year ended 30 June 1980 that figure was increased to 507.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Before calling on the member for Elizabeth, I remind members that, according to Sessional Orders, this Committee concludes its deliberations at 5.30 p.m. There are one or two procedural matters that the Committee must consider before that time. I therefore propose to bring these votes to a close at 5.25 p.m.

**The Hon. PETER DUNCAN:** The Minister's comment that the number of wills had substantially decreased surprised me, given the figures that Mr. Young read out and my prior knowledge of this matter. Nonetheless, I point out for the Minister's edification that the number of wills being made in any particular year does not impact the probate figures and the proportion of probates registered with the Supreme Court.

It was the policy of the former Government that, with the number of estates coming to fruition in the South-East and North of the State, the branch offices that had been opened at Mount Gambier and Port Augusta would be extended to include the administration of estates in those two places. The Minister would be well aware that the Executor Company has had an office in Mount Gambier for many years, in which it has administered estates. This has been an important decentralised industry in the area. It was always the Labor Government's intention, for that reason and for others, to expand those offices to ensure that estates that were generated in country areas were, where possible, administered in those areas. Can the Minister say what progress has been made in this direction in view of the fact that his policy generally in relation to the Public Trustee has not changed?

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** The offices at Mount Gambier in the South-East and at Port Augusta are valued and are being continued. However, the previous Government had not implemented the policy of having these offices provide administrative services as well as will-making services. The amount of business in both those offices at present does

not warrant such an extension. However, the provision of officers there to take instructions and make wills will continue. It is a question not of policy but of demand, and there does not seem to be a sufficient demand to warrant administration services being provided at Mount Gambier or Port Augusta.

**The Hon. PETER DUNCAN:** Will the Minister keep his eye on that matter, as I have always found a considerable degree of reluctance amongst public servants to support the establishment of regional offices, given the possibility that those same public servants, having been fairly well established in Adelaide, might have to man those offices? Although one can understand that, nonetheless this reluctance does exist. If this is the Minister's policy, I ask him to assure the Committee that he will keep the matter under review. The Minister has said that at present the level of work has not built up to a stage that would warrant this action being taken.

I was given an assurance some years ago that, at the rate at which wills were then being made, particularly at Port Augusta, it would not be that long before the number of estates generated through the wills made in Port Augusta would be adequate to support the establishment of an estate service there as well.

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** I think that the honourable member did perhaps have some rather grandiose ideas about an office at Port Augusta. I do not know whether or not they were warranted, but I shall certainly accede to his request and keep an eye on the question of having administration services placed in Mount Gambier and Port Augusta.

**Mr. GLAZBROOK:** I refer to page 542 of the programme papers and the figures listed. If one refers to the division of manpower resources in relation to revenue of the varying areas of the department, it becomes obvious that in some areas there are discrepancies or abnormalities about which I seek an explanation. For example, in relation to "Price Determination", there is a manpower provision of eight and a revenue provision of \$178 000, resulting in \$22 200 a head when compared with "Executive, Policy and Support Services", which has manpower of 28 and proposed revenue of \$590 000 and which results in a cost of about \$21 900 a head. Why are there higher costs in some areas compared with others? True, my query in relation to "Equal Opportunity", with actual revenue of \$54 000 in 1979-80 and a manpower component of three, may have been answered in relation to the question asked by the member for Elizabeth, but it indicates an expenditure of \$18 000 per person last year, but this year it appears to be about \$29 660. In comparing relative costs in relation to manpower and revenue, can the Minister explain the varying costs?

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** I will ask Mr. Young to give that answer.

**Mr. Young:** In the prices area, the eight officers working in the division are highly qualified, with each officer possessing tertiary qualifications (either accountancy or economics). The nature of their work is specialised and, consequently, they are more highly paid than some officers in other areas. This explains why the figure given by the member in regard to the prices area is \$22 000 for each officer. In regard to equal opportunity, the Commissioner is a particularly highly-paid officer because of her statutory responsibilities and the responsibility generally in relation to her activities. She is paid at an EO1 level, which is a salary in excess of \$30 000, and in a unit comprising few officers, that explains the sum involved.

Those figures, in one area, included terminal leave payments and pay-roll tax, whereas in another area they might not be included.

**Mr. GLAZBROOK:** Turning to the area of increases from last year's programme to this year's programme, I notice that in the area of price determination there are two staff members less this year than last year but a per head per annum increase of \$750 a year, as against consumer protection, which increased its staff by two, but had an increase per head of \$800.

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** I will ask Mr. Noblet to answer that question.

**Mr. Noblet:** Turning to the Prices Division, the price control officers whom Mr. Young mentioned are highly qualified. They applied for and were granted by the Public Service Board a reclassification during the current year, so the figure cannot be related directly to the figure per person for last year because they are now paid on a different classification. In relation to the consumer protection function, I would think that the reason why that has gone down to a lower cost per staff is that one of the positions that has not been filled since March this year is that of Commissioner of Consumer Affairs, which was the highest paid position in the division. If one takes out that position that will affect relativities from one year to the next.

**Mr. BANNON:** Turning to the "Boards and Committees—Members' fees" line of the Commercial Division, the budgeted amount was underspent last year, yet there is a substantial increase for 1980-81. What is the explanation for that?

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** I will ask Mr. Noblet to answer that question.

**Mr. Noblet:** In 1979-80 the amount voted was calculated on the assumption that the extension of the Residential Tenancies Act would apply to the whole State from 1 January 1980. That would have resulted in a large number of additional hearings in relation to disputes outside the metropolitan area and additional fees were therefore provided. In the event, though, that extension of the Act to the whole State was deferred for 12 months until 1 January 1981 and, therefore, members' fees were not as high as were expected.

**Mr. BANNON:** And the reason for the Budget increase?

**Mr. Noblet:** That is the doubling effect of taking it out one year and putting it in next year, the difference appears to be double.

**Mr. BANNON:** How many boards and committees are involved, and are there any new boards and committees established since September 1979?

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** There are 11 boards and committees involved and there are no new committees.

**Mr. BANNON:** Could the Minister supply written details of the members of the boards and their terms of office?

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** Yes.

**Mr. BANNON:** How many positions are currently vacant in the Department of Public and Consumer Affairs, and when is it proposed that they will be filled?

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** I can table a list of vacancies.

**The ACTING CHAIRMAN (Dr. Billard):** Do you seek leave to have that inserted in *Hansard*?

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** Yes.

Leave granted.

PERMANENT VACANCIES TO BE FILLED AT 4 OCTOBER 1980

Position No.	Division/Branch/Location	Title	Vice	Remarks
26157 04080	Births, Deaths and Marriages Births, Deaths and Marriages	Clerk C01 Clerk C01 (Part-time)	F. Visciglio I. McAuliffe	Applications being considered Applications being considered
66909 08610 17446	Commercial Licensing Commercial Licensing Residential Tenancies	Director E01 Manager A01 Clerical	G. F. Hiskey N.O.C.	Advertised in Circular 24/9/80 To be advertised
25307	Consumer Services	Off. I Legal Off. LE1	P. Hawke G. Canny	Recommendation to P.S.B. No action at this stage
17438	Consumer Services	Inv. Off. Gr. I (C03)	R. C. Ramsey	To be advertised
12675	Licensed Premises	Sup. of Lic. Prem.	P. F. Young	No action at this stage
02998	Licensed Premises	Licensing Inspector	C. B. Claxton	No action at this stage
70245	Management Services	Clerical Off. I	K. Schiller	R. Holland held against vacancy
25235	Policy Research	Ass. Proj. Officer	P. Garde	Position to be reclassified to Senior Project Officer A0-1
33065	Public Trustee	Dep. Public Trustee E01	N.O.C.	No action at this stage
52734	Public Trustee	Trust Off. II C04	P. C. McCarthy	No action at this stage
20610	Public Trustee	Wills Off. II C04	M. R. Sporne	No action at this stage
80523	Public Trustee	Checking Off. II C03	M. J. Neate	No action at this stage
35167 39601	Public Trustee Public Trustee	Clerk C02 Trust Off. I C02	A. B. Collins C. L. Bell	No action at this stage Advertised in P.S.B. Circular 1/10/80

## VACANCY POOL AS AT 4 OCTOBER 1980

Position No.	Division/Branch/Location	Title	Vice	Remarks
331969	Residential Tenancies	Dep. Reg.	N.O.C.	
134033	Consumer Services	Comm. for Con. Affairs	L. Baker	
204337	Consumer Services	Sen. Inv. Off. (A01)	F. Lyle	
325462	Consumer Services	Ass. Proj. Officer	A. Secker	No action is currently being taken with these vacancies
325219	Standards	Standards Officer	P. Pylipiec	
215087	Prices	Inv. Off. III (C05)	Stodart	
31830*	Management Services	Clerk C02	M. Robinson	
199849	Management Services	Steno Sec. I	No previous occupant	

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** Of the vacancies, 17 are being filled and eight are not.

**Mr. OSWALD:** I notice in the Auditor-General's Report that, in the Consumer Affairs Division, 8 300 complaints were investigated. Has there been any attempt to quantify how much it costs the taxpayer to investigate each complaint? Further, are there any mechanisms in the system to recoup some of this expenditure that the department must undertake in investigating complaints? I understand that in some cases, after investigation, there is a guilty party, and I wonder whether the department can claim against the party to recoup some of the massive expenditure undertaken.

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** There is no procedure for recovering any part of this expenditure, nor do I think there should be. This Government, as I believe the last Government was doing towards the end of its term of office, is starting to move away from the concept of consumer protection that has overtones of paternalism and of the Government's holding the consumer's hand towards education and fair trading. That is the policy of this Government.

It must be recognised that, in that context, the consumer generally speaking has a worse bargaining position than the supplier. That applies in some cases, but not in all. I believe that it has been found in Australia and in the rest of the Western world that there is a need for an organisation such as the Department of Public and Consumer Affairs and that it should be provided at public expense. I do not believe that there ought to be a procedure for recouping the cost from the people who make the complaint.

Regarding the cost, I cannot give an average figure. The figure for motor vehicle matters is approximate, on the basis of salaries and the fact that officers do other work on the one hand and, on the other hand, get back-up support. It may assist if I read from a minute regarding the cost of investigating complaints against car dealers. This information is available because a public comment was made recently by a car dealer on this question, as a result of which some calculations were made. The same information is not readily available with respect to other types of complaint. As a rough guide, the cost per complaint may be ascertained by dividing the total salaries paid to the relevant officers by the number of complaints received, as follows:

Total salaries to 30-6-80	\$197 325
Number of complaints in 1979-80	1 445
Cost per complaint on this basis	\$137.

It is not possible to obtain a completely accurate figure, because various complicated adjustments would have to be made on both sides. On the one hand, operating

expenses in addition to salaries would have to be apportioned to this function, as would support services supplied by the Management Services Division. On the other hand, other services to consumers would have to be taken into account. The figure of 1 445 refers only to formal complaints in writing which were accepted for investigation, that is, those for which a file is created and which are not simply the subject of advice to the consumer. In addition to these complaints, the relevant section of the Consumer Services Branch handled 29 584 inquiries in 1979-80. These would vary in complexity from a simple inquiry as to the period of the statutory warranty to more complicated inquiries as to the application of the relevant legislation to a particular situation.

So, it is not possible to give the figure across the board but certainly the Government does not contemplate any kind of procedure which will enable recompense to be obtained from the person making the complaint. It is quite apparent that that has been accepted everywhere and that there is a place for this kind of department.

**Mr. OSWALD:** It was not intended that any charge should be made against the member of the public making the complaint. My point was that the person against whom the complaint is made in some cases will be the guilty party, and the department will have found this out in its investigation. In those circumstances, where some company has been found to be deficient in its servicing, the department might recover from that guilty company or partly some of the costs of the investigation that took place.

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** No provision exists for doing that in the present law.

**The Hon. PETER DUNCAN:** It is a good idea though.

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** The member for Elizabeth says that it is a good idea, although I think it might receive some opposition. It is certainly a good idea, but we can think about it.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I draw the Committee's attention to the time and point out that there is one more line. The honourable member for Elizabeth.

**The Hon. PETER DUNCAN:** Why is it that the figures in the Estimates for actual payments, wages and salaries for the department vary from the figures in the Auditor-General's Report? For example, for "Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration—salaries, wages and related payments" in 1979 the figure was \$244 000, whereas in the Estimates it is \$238 980, and that goes on all the way through: the figures do not match up. I am wondering why that is and which figures are correct.

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** We do not have the answer, but I will see that it is provided.

**The CHAIRMAN:** There being no further questions, I declare the examination of the vote completed.

Minister of Consumer Affairs, Miscellaneous, \$20 000

**Chairman:**

Mr. E. K. Russack

**Members:**

Mr. J. C. Bannon  
 Dr. B. Billard  
 Mr. G. J. Crafter  
 The Hon. Peter Duncan  
 Mr. R. E. Glazbrook  
 Mr. J. Mathwin  
 Mr. J. K. G. Oswald  
 Mr. J. P. Trainer

**Witness:**

The Hon. J. C. Burdett, Minister of Community Welfare and Minister of Consumer Affairs.

**Departmental Advisers:**

Mr. M. A. Noblet, Director-General and Commissioner for Consumer Affairs, Department of Public and Consumer Affairs.

Mr. P. F. Young, Deputy Director-General and Superintendent of Licensed Premises, Department of Public and Consumer Affairs.

Mr D. V. Walker, Chief Management Services Officer, Department of Public and Consumer Affairs.

Mr. W. A. Pryor, Senior Management Services Officer, Department of Public and Consumer Affairs.

Mr. D. Selth, Prices Commissioner, Department of Public and Consumer Affairs.

Mr. P. W. Kay, Executive Officer, Department of Public and Consumer Affairs.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I declare the proposed expenditure open for examination.

**Mr. TRAINER:** I refer to the last line on page 93 of the Estimates, "Petroleum Industry Research Study", for which in 1979-80 \$19 000 was voted and \$18 750 was spent. Why is no allocation proposed for this study in 1980-81? Does it refer to the study that was co-sponsored by the Governments of South Australia and New South Wales and conducted through the University of Sydney? On what policy basis did the Government withdraw from the appropriation an amount that would assist in providing information that is badly needed?

The lack of data available is an international scandal as is the thimble and the pea trick that oil companies play with the petroleum industry. Here is the opportunity to get some information.

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** Funding for the project was approved by the previous Government in 1978 for a one-year period, on the basis of savings being achieved by the department. Those savings were achieved and the project was therefore funded for the period April 1979 to April 1980. The researchers have substantially completed the work contracted for. Some papers, however, due to the

complexity of the project, are still being completed but should be finalised by the end of 1980. With the receipt of these papers, the original commitment will have been fulfilled. The information generated by the project in conjunction with the P.J.T. reports will provide ample information for the department's monitoring functions.

**Mr. TRAINER:** Will this information be released for the benefit of the public and of this Parliament?

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** I will consider that.

**Mr. BANNON:** Would the Minister provide the Committee with details regarding grants to consumer organisations for 1980-81?

**The Hon. J. C. Burdett:** The original grant made by the previous Government was \$25 000 and, in its first year of operation, \$20 000 was granted to the Consumers Association of South Australia, and a further \$5 000 was given to the Association on the basis that it be made available for the Tenants Association. This was done by the previous Government on the basis that the Consumers Association would take steps to see that it was partly self-supporting in the future.

I recall being present at the opening of their premises and hearing the speech made by the Hon. Mr. Sumner, and this was clearly the objective. It was intended that the grant be made so that they could undertake a membership drive. It was expected that, as a result of that drive, they would get increased subscriptions and become self-supporting. That has not altogether happened.

The present Government, both last year and this year, allocated \$20 000 for consumer organisations. Last year, it was allocated in two lots. The first \$17 000 was allocated to the Consumers Association, and, as no application was made by the Tenants Association, the remaining \$3 000 was also allocated to the Consumers Association. This year, we have not yet received any applications. Certainly, a very substantial part of it would be expected to go to the Consumers Association.

This Government, as did the previous Government, hoped that the association would do something about becoming self-sufficient. It is intended to fund not specialised consumer organisations but generally ones of the nature of the Consumers Association of South Australia.

**The CHAIRMAN:** There being no further questions, I declare the examination of the vote completed. Members have now received a draft report of the Committee's proceedings.

**Mr. MATHWIN:** I move:

That the draft report, as circulated, be the report of the Committee.

Motion carried.

**Mr. MATHWIN:** I move:

That the Chairman be authorised to sign the minutes of this meeting.

Motion carried.

**The CHAIRMAN:** That completes the Committee's deliberations.

At 5.30 p.m. the Committee concluded.